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VOLUME 101, NO. 7

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PHILIP FONG

You're unlikely to last 12 rounds if Gennadiy Golovkin is landing cleanly and consistently. The gallant Ryota Murata put forth a tremendous effort before being stopped in the ninth round of an entertaining 160-pound unification bout in Saitama, Japan.

You're unlikely to last 12 rounds if Gennadiy Golovkin is landing cleanly and consistently. The gallant Ryota Murata put forth a tremendous effort before being stopped in the ninth round of an entertaining 160-pound unification bout in Saitama, Japan.

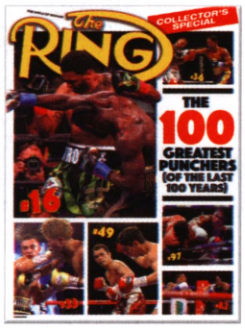
PHILIP FONG

100 GREATEST PUNCHERS

I know this is a subjective category, but whoever was responsible for this list ("The 100 Greatest Punchers of the Past 100 Years," June 2022 issue) has, in my opinion, some glaring omissions. To wit: Young Stribling. I mean, how can you leave out the man whose record Archie Moore shattered for most knockouts all time? And perhaps Vitali Klitschko (whose great knockout percentage was even mentioned in his brother's bio), and Jhonny Gonzalez (that's how he spells his first name, I believe).

Bob Gauthier
Ronkonkoma, N.Y.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S RESPONSE: No matter how many authors and experts lend their opinions and analyses to the compilation of any sort of boxing rankings, there will always be a few "glaring omissions," especially if the list seeks to rate something as subjective as punching power and it encompasses every weight class over the past 100 years. The three fighters you mention are certainly worthy, as are several other punchers who missed the final cut, such as Randall Bailey, Lucas Matthysse, Lamon Brewster and Daniel Ponce de Leon. Stribling, a hall of famer, recorded 129 KOs in a career that was tragically cut short by a motorcycle accident that took his life at 28. "The King of the Canebrakes" was literally born and bred to be a powerful athlete by his mother, a former vaudeville acrobat who had him in training before he could walk! However, unlike Archie Moore, the man who would break his KO record, Stribling didn't score many stoppages against fellow light heavyweight contenders or future hall of farmers. His battles with the best of his era – Tommy Loughran, Maxie Rosenbloom, Jimmy Slattery, Paul Berlenbach, Battling Levinsky, Mike McTigue, Johnny Risko and Jimmy Delaney – all went the distance. Vitali Klitschko's 87.2% KO ratio (41 stoppages in 47 pro bouts) is among the highest of all heavyweight titleholders, and higher than his brother Wladimir's 76.8%. However, the quality of Baby Bro's opposition was considerably better. Who's Vitali's most impressive KO victim? Kirk Johnson (TKO 2)? Corrie Sanders (TKO 8)? Most of his KOs were late-round stoppages, including a fair amount of corner retirements. Also, size advantage had to be taken into consideration with modern heavyweights. Vitali weighed in 27 pounds heavier than Vaughn Bean (TKO 11) and former light heavyweight titleholder Tomasz Adamek (TKO 10). He had 24 pounds on Herbie Hide (KO 2), 21 pounds on Larry Donald (TKO 10), and 19 pounds on former cruiserweight titleholder Juan Carlos Gomez (TKO 9). Of the three omissions you mentioned, Gonzalez, who scored 56 KOs in his 69 wins, is arguably the most worthy of the list. The Mexican boxer-puncher can count a pair of three-division titleholders as KO victims – Abner Mares, whom he blitzed in one round, and Hozumi Hasegawa, whom he halted in four – as well as faded hall of famer Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson (KO 8).



For the list of the 10 best body-punchers, did Lupe Pintor's name come up?

Dean S Monahan
Reading, Pa.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S RESPONSE: Pintor's name came up, but the bantamweight hall of famer just missed the cut along with other body punching experts, including Marco Antonio Barrera and Ricky Hatton.

A correction for you ... Naseem Hamed did not "lose his crown" to Marco Antonio Barrera in 2001. Hamed had vacated the title because he chose instead to face Barrera than the WBO's mandatory challenger, Istvan Kovacs (a point that never seems to earn The Prince any credit). The Barrera-Hamed fight was not a title fight.

As a side note, consider these statistics:

Knockouts as a % of WINS vs. QUALITY OPPONENTS (3 stars or better, according to BoxRec.com's ratings system)
1. Hamed 85%
2. Alexis Arguello 83%
3. Julian Jackson 80%

KnockDOWNS and Stoppages as a % of ROUNDS vs QUALITY OPPONENTS
1. Hamed - 24.2% (32 instances of 132 rounds vs quality opponents)
2. Arguello - 16.7% (44 of 264 rounds)
Note: 25 of those 264 rounds unseen and may have contained more knockdowns
3. Jackson - 13.0% (7 of 54 rounds)

Julian Jackson note: He was a real bomber for sure, but when he stepped up in class, his power statistics drastically declined.

Conclusion:

Punching Power rankings (of just these three) using some degree of objectivity in the rankings:
1. Hamed
2. Arguello
3. Jackson

Regarding the list of best right-crossers, only three times in his entire career did Julian Jackson use a right cross to knock out or knock down an opponent.
1. vs. Reinaldo Roque 5/18/83 in a first-round TKO (0-star opponent)
2. vs. Carlton Brown 1/20/84 in a first-round knockdown (0-star opponent)
3. vs. Francisco DeJesus 2/25/89 in a second-round knockdown (2-star opponent in a title defense)

That's it. That only accounted for 7% of his punches that caused knockdowns or stoppages (aka "damage punching").
By comparison, HOOKS (left and right) accounted for 76% of Jackson's damage punching, and specifically the left hook alone accounted for 55% of the knockdowns and knockouts he delivered. He is BY FAR a hooker and not a straight/cross puncher.

You guys are way off in including Jackson on the list of greatest right crosses. You are, however, quite appropriate to list Arguello, though his left hook to the head was even a greater weapon than his right cross.

AJ Sherman
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S RESPONSE: Jackson arguably could have been included among the best left hookers and body punchers, but we're sticking by our choice of placing him among the best right-hand punchers of all time. The Hawk's KOs of fellow hall of famer Terry Norris (it was a vicious right cross that put Norris to sleep standing – as Jackson noted in his foreword to the 100 Greatest Punchers special, the follow-up hook and cross were not necessary) and respected Ring-rated contenders Herol Graham (KO 4) and Dennis Milton (KO 1) were enough to merit his inclusion. However, Jackson scored several other right-hand-quitters against quality opposition, including unbeaten Agostino Cardamone (TKO 2) and rugged Francisco de Jesus (KO 8), who had never been stopped. Regarding Hamed's world-title status going into the Barrera fight, the undefeated British sensation was recognized as the lineal featherweight champion having held the WBO, IBF and WBC belts (and having knocked out Wilfredo Vazquez, who should have entered their bout wearing the WBA strap). When Barrera defeated Hamed, he was viewed as the lineal champ and was crowned by The Ring when the magazine reinstated its champion policy in 2002.

BULLDOG FIGHT

My compliments on the April 2022 issue of The Ring. We can hope and pray we see some of these dream matches this year. I also give compliments to Ron Lipton for the excellent Battle of the Legends between Harry Greb and Stanley Ketchel.
Years ago, I wrote to The Ring about a dream bout between Emile Grifith and other welterweights who won the middleweight title, like Mickey Walker. I wondered if you could find an expert who saw the "Toy Bulldog" fight. So how about it, Mr. Lipton? Mickey Walker vs. Emile Griffith, the winner vs. other 147-pound champs who won the 160-pound title, such as Carmen Basilio, Hitman Hearns – maybe Felix Trinidad!

Wise Gardner II
Hampton, Va.

ROBBERY!

It's been one month on from Josh Taylor vs. Jack Catterall, possibly the biggest robbery in boxing history! I'm still confused how anybody in the world, including the judges, did not score this fight in favor of Catterall. If the investigation does not result in judges being removed, then how can we as fans expect fighters to put their lives on the line for the sport? I was half expecting Taylor to admit post fight that he lost or at least drew. All respect at this stage for a delusional Taylor has disappeared into a cloud of confusion. This fight will become a huge stain on his professional record, resulting in adjustments to pound-for-pound ratings and casting big shadows for years to come.

George O'Neill
Oxfordshire, U.K.

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BLUE CORNER													

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

PRELIMS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
BLUE CORNER													

PRELIMS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
RED CORNER													
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ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
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Brooklyn, NY 11209

THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 101, NO. 7 (JULY 2022), is published 12 times per year by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 90254 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11209 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: The Ring Magazine Subscriber Service Dept., PO Box 16027, North Hollywood, CA 91615-6027, Phone: 818-286-3101; rngcs@magserv.com. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S.A. and Canada (£5.99 in the U.K.). Subscription price U.S. and possession $39.99 for 12 issues including Canada. Mexico add $5. All remaining countries add $10 for 12 issues per year. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2020 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: advertising@sepublications.com. U.S. / Canadian and International distribution by Comag Marketing Group LLC, 155 Village Blvd #200, Princeton, NJ 08540. UK distribution by Seymour Distribution Ltd., 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, England, EC1A 9PT. Printed In U.S.A.

RINGSIDE BY DOUG FISCHER

A NEW RESPECT FOR WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

The Klitschko brothers now display their fighting hearts outside the ring.

The horrors taking place in war-torn Ukraine are a tragic reminder that there's a much bigger world outside of boxing's often-insular community and there are way more important things than the next big fight or whatever hardcore fans are obsessing about via social media this week.

As this issue went to press, more than 1,800 Ukrainian citizens had been killed since Russia's invasion began on February 24. Tens of millions have been displaced from their homes or forced to flee Ukraine.

War. Exodus. Mass loss of life. That's as real as it gets. As tough as boxing is, it's still just a sport, and it's more about business and entertainment on the world-class professional level.

However, history has shown us that boxing is sometimes connected to much larger issues. Sometimes the graduates and denizens of our favorite bloodsport can inspire the world at large with their bravery outside of the ring. That's what we're witnessing with the bold stand retired heavyweight champions Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko have made against Vladimir Putin's tyranny.

Several other active Ukrainian

Wladimir Klitschko's second title reign is comparable to the all-time great championship runs of Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali and Larry Holmes.

boxers, including pound-for-pound-rated Oleksander Usyk and Vasiliy Lomachenko, are also doing their part to help defend their country while bolstering morale among Ukraine's citizens and military.

But no other Ukrainian boxer or sports figure has called as much attention to the atrocities happening in his country or the need for foreign aid as much as Wladimir Klitschko, who has stuck by his older brother, the mayor of Kyiv (Ukraine's capital) since 2014, while dedicating his celebrity status and social media to rallying international support.

Vitali, the champion-turned-politician, is obviously a huge symbol of national pride and a wartime leader second only to Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, but Wladimir's influence transcends politics.

The younger Klitschko, a 1996 Olympic gold medalist, is the more talented, charismatic and accomplished of the heavyweight brothers. His two title reigns – a two-year WBO run at the start of the 2000s that included five defenses, and much longer unified-belt dominance during the late 2000s and the first half of the 2010s – placed his name among the all-time great heavyweight champions, at least in terms of stats.

Some historians and boxing journalists began comparing Wladimir with Joe Louis toward the end of his second title reign, which spanned from 2006 to 2015. Once Klitschko's heavyweight monarchy surpassed seven years, only the great Brown Bomber had a longer uniterrupted reign. And once Wladimir surpassed 20 title defenses (over his two reigns), which he accomplished with a fifth-round stoppage of Alex Leapai in 2014, the name of Muhammad Ali – who made 19 defenses over his two reigns in the 1960s and '70s – was added to the mix.

I won't lie, it bugged the shit out of me at the time. It was boxing blasphemy! Louis fought when there was one world championship; Wladdy occupied the four-belt era. And come on, the challengers that Klitschko faced can't compare with Ali's dance partners during the heavyweight division's Golden Age. I said all of that, I wrote all of that, and I meant every word – at the time.

Looking back on his resume now, I can admit that I was being harsh. Wladimir – who started both reigns by beating an undersized but stylistic nightmare in Chris Byrd – had a hell of a run, especially the second time around with Emanuel Steward-enhanced technique. He scored rematch knockouts of hard-punching Lamon Brewster and Samuel Peter; outclassed two unbeaten Olympic medalists, Sultan Ibragimov and Alexander Povetkin; and turned back the challenge of dangerous standouts like David Haye and Tony Thompson (twice).

Klitschko earned the Ring Magazine championship with his 2009 stoppage of unbeaten former world amateur champion Ruslan Chagaev and defended it 11 times before his upset loss to Tyson Fury in November 2015. In all, Wladimir made 23 title defenses over his two reigns, a total second only to Louis' record of 25.

Klitschko was an elite-level competitor who had a great championship run, but what he's doing now is what makes me realize that he's cut from the same cloth as Louis and Ali. He possesses their character and courage; the same duty and honor to his country as Louis embodied during World War II; the same commitment to his values and social justice that Ali personified during America's Civil Rights Movement.

Ali risked physical attacks outside of the ring for his political and religious beliefs; he was willing to give up his career and freedom for his faith. The Klitschko brothers are willing to give up their lives in defense of their country and culture, and in doing so they've become worldwide symbols of democracy and freedom, just as Louis was during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Their mentor, Max Schmeling, would be proud.

At the start of this year, I had originally planned for this issue of The Ring to be a special edition showcasing the International Boxing Hall of Fame classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022, which will all be inducted in the same ceremony in Canastota, New York, in June (when this issue will be on sale). There are more than enough popular and respected champions represented in those induction classes – including Roy Jones Jr., Bernard Hopkins, James Toney, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Juan Manuel Marquez, Shane Mosley and Miguel Cotto – to fill 80 glossy pages of a magazine I figured would sell like hot cakes during induction weekend.

Wladimir Klitschko is one of those popular and respected inductees. My hope and prayer is that all of the madness ravaging Ukraine at press time will have ended before June and Wladimir can be there in Canastota to take his rightful place among the legends, as his brother did in 2018. But I know that even if the war ended today, the work of rebuilding Ukraine would just be getting started and Wladimir would want to be directly involved, still at his brother's side.

His absence at this year's Hall of Fame induction will be a stark reminder of what is really important in life, and hopefully it will inspire us to do what we can to not only support Ukraine but to also strengthen our commitment to our own communities and values.

To find out how you can support Ukraine during its time of need, visit Wladimir Klitschko's Instagram account @klitschko and follow the link in his bio. – https://zez.am/act.now.by.klitschko

ROUND 1

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH ★ NEW FACES +

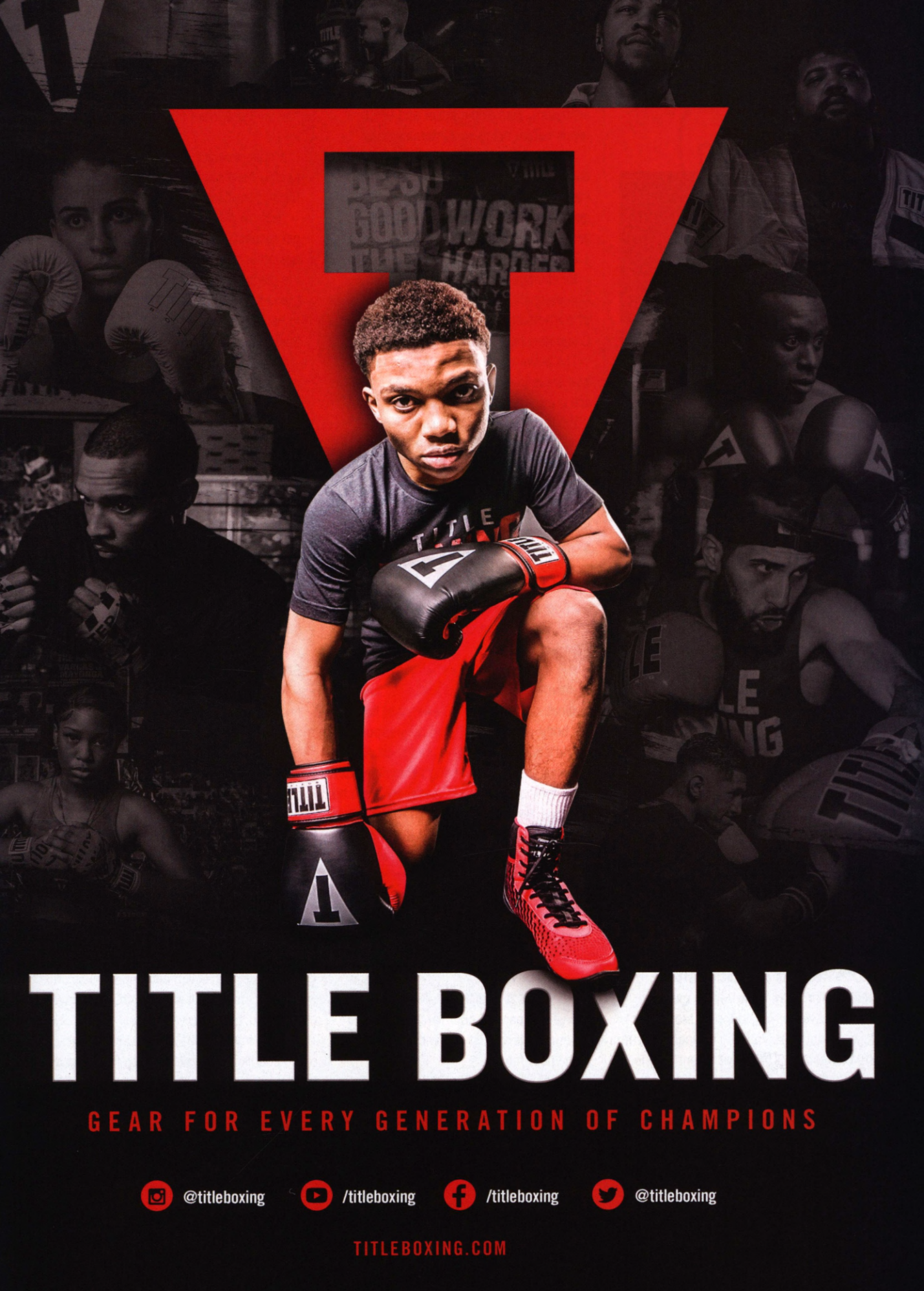
FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

BY TOM GRAY

Warrington was back to his best in the Kiko Martinez rematch.

JOSH WARRINGTON

A broken hand. A broken jaw and surgery. There was an obvious downside to Josh Warrington becoming a two-time featherweight titleholder at the First Direct Arena in Leeds, England, on March 26. However, after everything the British star has endured in recent months, it's all been worth it. Indeed, Warrington has been forced to convalesce for a very long time and his comeback has been inspiring. On February 13, 2021, Mexican power-puncher Mauricio Lara left a stricken Warrington staring up at the arc lights, victim to a crushing ninth-round stoppage. "The Leeds Warrior" dutifully signed on for the rematch, but the pain of defeat was only replaced by emptiness when the sequel was declared a second-round technical draw after Lara was cut by a clash of heads. The 31-year-old Warrington was still hungry for success, however, and his luck was about to change. When Kiko Martinez scored a spectacular sixth-round knockout of Kid Galahad in November, he picked up the very IBF title that Warrington had relinquished just prior to the Lara defeat. Martinez and Warrington had history. In May 2017, the Leeds man won a 12-round majority decision over Martinez, who was convinced he'd fallen victim to home cooking. Now armed with a world title, and with Warrington's form having dipped, this was the perfect time for the Spanish veteran to undertake a revenge mission. It was not to be. Warrington whipped himself into incredible fighting shape and attacked savagely on fight night. In Round 1, Martinez, like Lara, suffered a cut from a clash of heads, and a big right hand blasted him to the canvas. In every round, Warrington would release prolonged bursts of power punching, and the defending titleholder lacked the time and the distance to get his own punches off. Two more cuts transformed Martinez's face into a grotesque crimson mask, and when Warrington broke through with yet another brutal assault in the seventh, referee Marcus McDonnell had no choice but to stop the contest. "It's up there with the best nights of my career," a beaming Warrington told The Ring after his most recent triumph.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NEW FACES: JUSTIS HUNI

By **Anson Wainwright**

AGE: 23
HOMETOWN: Brisbane, Australia
WEIGHT CLASS: heavyweight
HEIGHT: 6-foot-4 (193 cm)
AMATEUR RECORD: 80-10
TURNED PRO: 2020
PRO RECORD: 5-0 (4 KOs)
TRAINER: Rocki Huni
MANAGER: Michael and Fran Francis
PROMOTER: Dean Lonergan
INSTAGRAM: @justis_huni

BEST NIGHT OF PRO CAREER AND WHY: Huni defeated the more experienced Faiga Opelu (then 13-1-1) via seventh-round stoppage in his pro contest in October 2020.

"My professional debut, fighting in front of a sold-out home crowd," Huni told The Ring. "[I made] history by fighting for the Australian heavyweight title."

WORST NIGHT OF PRO CAREER AND WHY: Huni dominated previously unbeaten Paul Gallen, stopping the former Rugby League star midway through the 10th and final round, in his most recent bout in June 2021. However, the victory came at a cost.

"I went into the fight carrying an injury," he said. "Didn't get to perform to the best of my ability, and it also set me back and ruled me out for fighting for my country at the 2020 Olympic Games."

WHY HE'S A PROSPECT: Huni had amateur success domestically as a schoolboy, then at the junior and youth levels before doing well internationally.

"I had a very long amateur career," he said. "[I had] my first official fight the day I turned 10 years old. Then [I continued], getting some wins under my belt and winning my first national championship at 13."

He claimed gold in the World Youth Championships in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2016 and bronze at the 2019 World Championships at senior level.

The powerful heavyweight feels he has two areas in which he excels: "My strengths are my speed and movement."

His father, Rocki, who also serves as his trainer, believes his son has the ability to make waves in boxing's glamour division.

"Justis has good footwork, head movement and a good boxing I.Q.," said Huni Sr. "He has a unique style as a heavyweight; he fights more like a middleweight."

Two-division titleholder Tim Bradley, who now serves as a commentator for ESPN, sees a lot of potential in the young Australian.

"He's very skillful," said Bradley. "His creativity is his offense. He has the full arsenal: uppercuts, left hooks, right hands to the body, good speed, good counterpuncher.

"He's very educated on the inside. A lot of times, heavyweights don't know how to carry themselves on the inside; they're a bit reckless. He does. He knows how to operate inside the pocket and outside the pocket as well. You don't see a whole lot of footwork in today's heavyweights, but Huni has really good footwork, really turns on angles. He tries to step around guys, making guys miss and making them pay. He has a lot of flair in his style."

WHY HE'S A SUSPECT: The 23-year-old has yet to spar any high-level pros. That experience is a must and will likely change in the near future.

Huni Sr. acknowledges there are a few things Jr. must work on.

"Transition from the amateur style to the pros," said the trainer. "Like sitting down on key punches. Working on aggression rather than boxing for points. Sparring at a higher level than we have in Australia."

Huni is a work in progress. He's likely to rise to the top in Oceania quickly. However, how he does internationally will be a bigger test.

Bradley doesn't believe Huni has fight-ending power but feels he can compensate for that in other ways.

"He's a sharp enough counterpuncher to get respect," said the ace commentator. "He has other attributes to his game that take the place of that one-punch power. But in the heavyweight division, he's going to have to be very defensively sound, because all it takes is one shot.

"Sometimes fighters who have a really good offense don't pay attention to what's coming back. I can see him in situations where he'll land his offense and he's not really worried about return fire. But from here on, he needs to worry about what's next: What position do I need to be in so I don't get countered?

"I would say stay off the ropes. You don't want to be on the ropes against the top heavyweights. Keep the fight in the center of the ring where you're going to have the advantage and athleticism to outbox these guys."

STORYLINES: Huni was born and raised in Meadowbrook, a suburb of Brisbane. He was first introduced to boxing as a 3-year-old and never looked back.

"I was always hanging around boxing gyms," he said. "My dad trained my older brother and I always used to be in the gym playing around on the bags and watching.

"[I was] surrounded by good friends and family, who have supported me through thick and thin in my journey, which has helped me get to the point I am at today."

The young Australian has high hopes for future success in the heavyweight division.

"My goal in this sport is to make it to the top of the division and hopefully be remembered for all the great things I have achieved," he said.

Away from boxing, Huni enjoys a simple life and likes to relax by going fishing and playing pool.

Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright.

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The legendary Bob Fitzsimmons took on men of all shapes and sizes and annexed world titles at middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight.

JABS AND STRAIGHT WRITES

BY THOMAS HAUSER

ORIGIN OF AN ADAGE

THE RING MAGAZINE

"The bigger they are, the harder they fall" is one of boxing's most endearing adages.

It came from Budd Schulberg's novel – *The Harder They Fall* – which was based on Primo Carnera and made into a feature film starring Humphrey Bogart. Right?

Wrong.

Okay. Let's try again.

It was Bob Fitzsimmons who coined the phrase in a newspaper interview prior to fighting James J. Jeffries, although accounts differ as to whether it was before their 1899 fight at Coney Island or their 1902 rematch in San Francisco.

Strike two … One more strike and you're out. You'd better ask Adam Pollack for help.

Pollack is an Iowa attorney who has written a series of groundbreaking biographies about boxing's early gloved champions. He traces the phrase back to John L. Sullivan.

More specifically, as recounted by Pollack, Mike Donovan (a former fighter turned boxing instructor) said of Sullivan in 1884, "He can settle any man in the world, and the bigger the man against him, the better it is for him. I was with him in Hot Springs when they picked a terrible big fellow for him to knock out. I felt of this fellow at the hotel – and I tell you he was something immense – he had the broadest shoulders of any man I ever saw, was as hard as iron, and weighed about 240 pounds. I told John of the kind of a fellow he had to meet. 'Is he a big fellow?' says John. 'You can bet,' says I. 'He's a stunner.' 'Then the bigger he is, the harder he'll fall,' says John. Well, he knocked that big fellow out in just two punches."

Eight years later, prior to fighting James J. Corbett, Sullivan was reflecting on his ring career and said that Herbert Slade (a 200-pound New Zealander) was among the "gamest" fighters he'd ever fought. But, Pollack notes, The Great John L. added, "Slade had the disadvantage that all big men have that I have met with. The bigger they are, the more heavily they fall."

Of course, they only fall hard if you can knock them down.

★ ★ ★

Most boxing fans don't know who Henry Hascup is. But the 73-year-old New Jersey resident has served the sweet science in numerous ways. He has been president of the New Jersey Boxing Hall of Fame since 1986, a contributing editor for BoxRec.com, a charter member of the International Boxing Research Organization and president

of several amateur boxing organizations. He has also been the ring announcer for more than a thousand mostly amateur fights and eulogized fighters at countless funerals. But it might be that Hascup's most notable contribution is embodied in the emails he sends to members of the boxing community when one of our own dies.

"It started in the 1980s," Hascup recalls. "As president of the New Jersey Boxing Hall of Fame, whenever someone in boxing died, I'd call around to let people know. Then the internet and email came in and I started notifying people that way. I have close to a thousand people on my email list. And the people on my email list have their own email lists. So when someone dies, it snowballs.

"Sometimes I'll read about a death on the internet," Hascup continues. "Usually I find out because someone calls and tells me. Before I send out a notification, I double-check to make sure the person has really died. I've never counted but I'd guess that, over the years, I've sent out notifications for close to a thousand deaths. The hardest thing is when someone calls and tells me that their husband or father has died. In that moment, a four-round fighter is as important as a great world champion.

"I can't say I enjoy doing it," Hascup says. "But it's a service, and I guess I'm the one who's doing it."

★★★

Three years ago, Jody Heaps (who spent three decades as a senior creative director and executive producer for boxing-related projects at Showtime) wrote a short play entitled *Into That Good Night*. The play was well-received by several writing competitions but butted heads with the coronavirus era. Now Heaps and director Gerard Zarra have reconstructed the work as a 20-minute film set in the 1970s entitled *No Peanuts for Brooks McGill*.

Acclaimed coach Teddy Atlas returns to acting.

This is the first movie that Heaps has written. The protagonist (played by Richard O'Brien) is Brooks McGill – a self-described "self-destructive failure of a sportswriter and hopeless drunk." In a nod to *The Twilight Zone*, Brooks is locked in a bar alone with his memories and all the liquor in the world and can't get out.

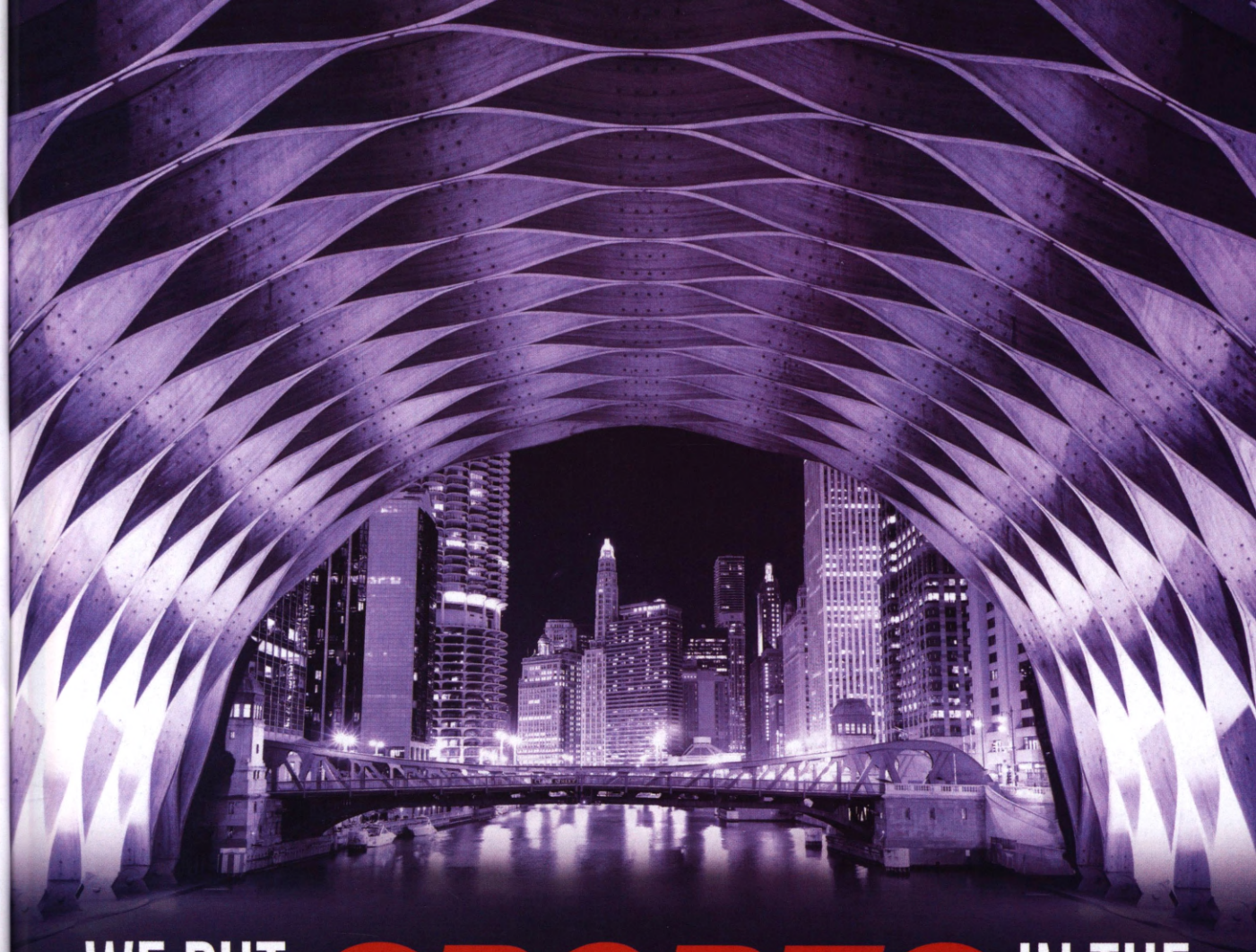
"It never occurred to me to draw a parallel with *The Twilight Zone*," Heaps told The Ring. "But I'm thrilled that you say it. And now that I think about it, it totally makes sense."

Brooks was fired from his job as a sportswriter (Joseph Rose plays his boss) because his drinking got out of control. His wife (Carla Briscoe) left him for the same reason. When the divorce was finalized, Brooks asked her if there was somebody else and she answered, "God, there must be." Jimmy (played by Teddy Atlas) is the owner of the bar that McGill finds himself in. Each of these characters visits Brooks in flashbacks. Boxing is an undercurrent throughout the film. The acting, writing and directing are very good.

Heaps and Zarra plan to enter *No Peanuts for Brooks McGill* in various film festivals in the hope that someone will license it and give it a wider audience. And Jody has a memory of working with Atlas that's worth sharing.

"I called Teddy to ask if he'd play the role of Jimmy," Heaps recalls. "He didn't remember me but he was polite and asked me to send him the script, which I did. He read it, asked a bunch of intelligent questions, suggested some very good changes, and said he'd do it. We had next to nothing in the budget to pay the actors but he said that wouldn't be a problem. He liked it, so he'd do it. We shot it in one day. And at the end of the day, Teddy did something remarkable. He told me to take what would have been his pay and add it on to whatever we were paying the film crew."

Thomas Hauser's email address is thomashauserwriter@gmail.com. His most recent book – Broken Dreams: Another Year Inside Boxing – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism. In 2019, he was selected for boxing's highest honor – induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.



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THE INDISPENSABLE TAMI COTEL

THE FACE OF BOXING

The public-at-large doesn't know Tami Cotel. But for more than three decades, she has been an integral part of boxing telecasts and has seen more fights than most fight fans ever will. Since 1985, when HBO first hired her, she has worked on a freelance basis for almost every major network that has televised boxing.

Cotel's position has been variously described as production coordinator, floor director and stage manager. In the days leading up to a fight, she's responsible for contacting each fighter's camp to set up fighter meetings with the network announcing team, ensuring that each fighter gets to the weigh-in on time and interacting with state athletic commissions to confirm data on various matters.

On fight night, Tami arrives at the arena six hours early, checks out the location of the dressing rooms and times each fighter's ring walk. Over the next five hours, she handles myriad chores and advises each fighter's camp as to when the fighter should be ready for his or her ring walk.

Once the telecast starts, Cotel walks the first TV fighters to the ring. While that bout is in progress, she revisits the dressing rooms of the fighters who will be up next. After each bout ends, she climbs into the ring and, if the fight has gone the distance, looks at the ring announcer's cue card. Then she whispers the result to the production truck over her headset. After that, she brings the winner (and sometimes the loser) to a post-fight interview. While the interview is going on, she runs back to the dressing room to repeat the process for the next fight.

Over the years, Cotel has earned the trust of virtually everyone in boxing. "Tami," Jim Lampley once said, "is the one totally indispensable element of HBO's boxing telecasts." Roy Jones added, "Tami's got a job where the person who has it can be a nuisance and a bother and in everybody's way, but she's not like that. Tami makes you want to help her."

And then there's George Foreman, who worked with Tami for years. Tami's life has been hard at times, and she has shared personal confidences with George.

"I saw Joe Frazier drop Muhammad Ali at Madison Square Garden in 1971," Foreman recounts. "I was sure it was all over for Ali. He didn't win that night, but he found out so much about himself and never giving up. Tami is a fighter. I have watched her for so many years. I've seen her stumble and fall. She has risen up and finished every fight like a champion. With pride, I mention her name." RING

Wojtek Urbanek is based in New York and can be reached at studio@wojtekurbanek.com. Thomas Hauser's email address is thomashauserwriter@gmail.com.

RATINGS

SUMMARY ★ ANALYSIS

The Ring Ratings through fights of April 9, 2022

RECENT FIGHT RESULTS AND CHANGES IN THE RING'S DIVISIONAL RANKINGS BY BRIAN HARTY

CRUISERWEIGHT: Kevin Lerena (No. 5 last month) moved up to heavyweight with a promising fourth-round knockout of Romanian journeyman Bogdan Dinu, so the South African was removed from the cruiserweight ranks and everyone below him got a one-level promotion. The newly vacant spot at No. 10 was claimed by decorated Englishman Chris Billam-Smith, whose only loss was a split decision against Richard Riakporhe in 2019. The physically imposing Riakporhe, who was himself introduced to the list at No. 10 just last month, got an extra bump to No. 8 after knocking out fellow Londoner Deion Jumah with a straight right to the body in the eighth round.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: In Montreal, France's Christian Mbilli found the off switch on Nadjib Mohammedi's temple with a frighteningly compact left hook, dropping his inert countryman for the immediate win in Round 5. Mbilli rose from No. 8 to No. 7 as a result.

Ryan Garcia was taken 12 rounds by Emmanuel Tagoe.

MIDDLEWEIGHT: Fighting in Japan a day after his 40th birthday, Gennadiy Golovkin (No. 1) faced Ryota Murata (rated No. 5 at the time) in an effort to unify a couple of titles and perhaps rekindle the public's interest in a trilogy with Canelo Alvarez. Murata was in it to win it, scoring early with some nice body shots in particular, but GGG started tightening the screws in the fifth round and by the end of the sixth, Murata was looking ragged from all the hammering. He managed to survive until the ninth and even staged a mini-rally, but missing with an exhausted left hook created the perfect target for a quick right from Golovkin to end the fight. In the ratings, Murata dropped to No. 7.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT: No. 5-rated Tim Tszyu was floored by a right cross from Terrell Gausha (unrated) in the opening frame of their 12-rounder in Minneapolis, but the Australian prince salvaged his U.S. debut with a unanimous decision victory, negating Gausha's boxing skills (and his own defensive holes) with effective power-punching. One member of the Ratings Panel suggested moving Tszyu up, but the rest struck down the idea, pointing out the superior resumes above him.

One of those resumes, that of Erickson Lubin (No. 4 last month), was besmirched when he lost by stoppage to Sebastian Fundora (No. 6 at the time). Both fighters were knocked down in an action-packed fight – always a sight to see with Fundora, who, at 6-foot-6, towers over anyone he faces – but Lubin's face was horribly swollen after nine rounds and his corner had seen enough. He fell to No. 7 and Fundora rose to No. 2. Lubin's rank was also influenced by the fact that Tony Harrison, who was bumped from No. 7 to No. 6, won a unanimous decision over Sergio Garcia on the same card.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: Sandor Martin held his position at No. 10 with a stay-busy unanimous decision over Jose Felix (unrated).

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Gustavo Lemos has never fought outside of his native Argentina, but he also has never lost in 28 fights, and his fifth-round stoppage of former titleholder Lee Selby was strong enough to get him on the list at No. 10, replacing William Zepeda.

Ryan Garcia (No. 5) dominated Emmanuel Tagoe en route to a unanimous decision in a main event at the Alamodome, a sign of his healthy popularity, but he'll need a bigger opponent to overtake the accomplishments of those above him on the list.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT: Miguel Berchelt (No. 2 last month) moved up in weight, though things didn't go well for him at 135, as he was stopped in six rounds by Jeremia Nakathila in March. With that migration, the result and his previous fight (a complete demolition by Oscar Valdez in February 2021) in mind, Berchelt was removed from the list, which elevated everyone and made room for Mexico's Eduardo Ramirez at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHT: Kiko Martinez (No. 6 last month) earned the 2021 Comeback of the Year award with his title-winning stoppage of Kid Galahad and he was hoping to keep the party going with some revenge against Josh Warrington, but it was not to be. Warrington, who beat Martinez by majority decision in 2017, used their rematch in Leeds on March 26 to stage a comeback of his own, having suffered a loss and a draw against Mauricio Lara in his previous two fights. Martinez was brave, but Warrington shredded the Spaniard with some furious assaults (and a head clash or two) and stopped him in the seventh round. Warrington (No. 5 last month), regained the IBF title and rose to No. 4 while Martinez dropped to No. 7.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: Azat Hovhannisyan remained at No. 7 with a second-round stoppage of Dagoberto Aguero. It was a notable win over a solid opponent, just not enough to jump over unbeaten Ra'eese Aleem at this point.

BANTAMWEIGHT: Nordine Oubaali announced his retirement at age 35 with a record of 17-1 (12 KOs) – the one loss being a fourth-round knockout at the hands of Nonito Donaire a year ago. With the No. 4-rated Frenchman's departure, those below him moved up, and caught in that move was Jason Moloney (No. 5 last month), who won a stay-busy UD over Francisco Pedroza. The vacancy created at No. 10 allowed for the return of Jonas Sultan.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT: Andrew Moloney remained at No. 10 with an eighth-round knockout of Gilberto Mendoza (unrated).

FLYWEIGHT: WBO titleholder Junto Nakatani (No. 3 last month) impressed a lot of panelists with his eighth-round stoppage of No. 10-rated Ryota Yamauchi – enough that he was elevated to No. 1. Yamauchi dropped out and the slack was taken up by undefeated Mexican Angel Ayala Lardizabal, who entered at No. 8 after a unanimous decision over No. 10-rated Cristofer Rosales, who stayed put for lack of a more qualified replacement.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT: Previously undefeated Agustin Gauto (No. 7 last month) was beat down by Filipino darkhorse Miel Fajardo in two rounds, prompting the Argentine's ejection from the rankings. The resulting vacancy at No. 10 went to undefeated South African Sivenathi Nontshinga.

STRAWWEIGHT: Petchmanee CP Freshmart and Wanheng Menayothin (or Panya Pradabsri and Chayaphon Moonsri, if you prefer), rated Nos. 2 and 3 respectively, fought to the same conclusion as their fight in 2020, with Freshmart winning a slightly wider unanimous decision to keep the status quo in the top half of the list. In the bottom half, Ginjiro Shigeoka jumped from No. 10 to No. 8 with a unanimous decision over Tatsuro Nakashima for the Japanese title.

P4P

1 **CANELO ALVAREZ**
Mexico • 57-1-2 (39 KOs)

2 **OLEKSANDR USYK**
Ukraine • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)

3 **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
U.S. • 38-0-0 (29 KOs)

4 **NAOYA INOUE**
Japan • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

5 **ERROL SPENCE JR.**
U.S. • 27-0-0 (21 KOs)

6 **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
Mexico • 42-3-0 (28 KOs)

7 **VASILIY LOMACHENKO**
Ukraine • 16-2-0 (11 KOs)

8 **JOSH TAYLOR**
U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)

9 **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua • 51-3-0 (41 KOs)

10 **KAZUTO IOKA**
Japan • 28-2-0 (15 KOs)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C **TYSON FURY** RING, WBC
U.K. • 31-0-1 (22 KOs)

1 **OLEKSANDR USYK** IBF, WBA, WBO
Ukraine • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)

2 **ANTHONY JOSHUA**
U.K. • 24-2-0 (22 KOs)

3 **DEONTAY WILDER**
U.S. • 42-2-1 (41 KOs)

4 **DILLIAN WHYTE**
U.K. • 28-2-0 (19 KOs)

5 **JOSEPH PARKER**
New Zealand • 30-2-0 (21 KOs)

6 **ANDY RUIZ JR.**
U.S. • 34-2-0 (22 KOs)

7 **LUIS ORTIZ**
Cuba • 33-2-0 (28 KOs)

8 **JOE JOYCE**
U.K. • 13-0-0 (12 KOs)

9 **FILIP HRGOVIC**
Croatia • 14-0-0 (12 KOs)

10 **FRANK SANCHEZ**
Cuba • 20-0-0 (13 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 POUNDS

C **MAIRIS BRIEDIS** RING, IBF
Latvia • 28-1-0 (20 KOs)

1 **YUNIEL DORTICOS**
Cuba • 25-2-0 (23 KOs)

2 **LAWRENCE OKOLIE** WBO
U.K. • 18-0-0 (14 KOs)

3 **ILUNGA MAKABU** WBC
Congo • 29-2-0 (25 KOs)

4 **THABISO MCHUNU**
S. Africa • 23-6-0 (13 KOs)

5 **KRZYSZTOF GLOWACKI**
Poland • 31-3-0 (19 KOs)

6 **ALEKSEI PAPIN**
Russia • 13-1-0 (12 KOs)

7 **MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**
Poland • 46-5-0 (31 KOs)

8 **RICHARD RIAKPORHE**
U.K. • 14-0-0 (10 KOs)

9 **RYAD MERHY**
Belgium • 30-1-0 (25 KOs)

10 **CHRIS BILLAM-SMITH**
U.K. • 14-1-0 (10 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**

1 **ARTUR BETERBIEV** IBF, WBC
Russia • 17-0-0 (17 KOs)

2 **DMITRY BIVOL** WBA
Russia • 19-0-0 (11 KOs)

3 **JOE SMITH JR.** WBO
U.S. • 28-3-0 (22 KOs)

4 **MAXIM VLASOV**
Russia • 46-4-0 (26 KOs)

5 **GILBERTO RAMIREZ**
Mexico • 43-0-0 (29 KOs)

6 **CALLUM SMITH**
U.K. • 28-1-0 (20 KOs)

7 **MARCUS BROWNE**
U.S. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)

8 **ANTHONY YARDE**
U.K. • 22-2-0 (21 KOs)

9 **JOSHUA BUATSI**
U.K. • 15-0-0 (13 KOs)

10 **MATHIEU BAUDERLIQUE**
France • 21-1-0 (12 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 POUNDS

C **CANELO ALVAREZ** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
Mexico • 57-1-2 (39 KOs)

1 **DAVID BENAVIDEZ**
U.S. • 25-0-0 (22 KOs)

2 **CALEB PLANT**
U.S. • 21-1-0 (12 KOs)

3 **BILLY JOE SAUNDERS**
U.K. • 30-1-0 (14 KOs)

4 **ANTHONY DIRRELL**
U.S. • 34-2-2 (25 KOs)

5 **JOHN RYDER**
U.K. • 31-5-0 (17 KOs)

6 **DAVID LEMIEUX**
Canada • 43-4-0 (36 KOs)

7 **CHRISTIAN MBILLI**
France • 21-0-0 (19 KOs)

8 **FEDOR CHUDINOV**
Russia • 25-2-1 (17 KOs)

9 **ZACH PARKER**
U.K. • 22-0-0 (16 KOs)

10 **LERRONE RICHARDS**
U.K. • 16-0-0 (3 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**

1 **GENNADIY GOLOVKIN** IBF, WBA
Kazakhstan • 42-1-1 (37 KOs)

2 **JERMALL CHARLO** WBC
U.S. • 32-0-0 (22 KOs)

3 **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE** WBO
U.S. • 31-0-0 (19 KOs)

4 **JAIME MUNGUIA**
Mexico • 39-0-0 (31 KOs)

5 **CHRIS EUBANK JR.**
U.K. • 32-2-0 (23 KOs)

6 **ZHANIBEK ALIMKHANULY**
Kazakhstan • 11-0-0 (7 KOs)

7 **RYOTA MURATA**
Japan • 16-3-0 (13 KOs)

8 **CARLOS ADAMES**
Dom. Rep. • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)

9 **SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO**
Ukraine • 13-4-0 (10 KOs)

10 **FELIX CASH**
U.K. • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 POUNDS

C **JERMELL CHARLO** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC
U.S. • 34-1-1 (18 KOs)

1 **BRIAN CASTANO** WBO
Argentina • 17-0-2 (12 KOs)

2 **SEBASTIAN FUNDORA**
U.S. • 19-0-1 (13 KOs)

3 **JARRETT HURD**
U.S. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)

4 **ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba • 28-3-3 (16 KOs)

5 **TIM TSZYU**
Australia • 21-0-0 (15 KOs)

6 **TONY HARRISON**
U.S. • 29-3-1 (21 KOs)

7 **ERICKSON LUBIN**
U.S. • 24-2-0 (17 KOs)

8 **MAGOMED KURBANOV**
Russia • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)

9 **ISRAIL MADRIMOV**
Uzbekistan • 8-0-0 (6 KOs)

10 **LIAM SMITH**
U.K. • 30-3-1 (17 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**

1 **TERENCE CRAWFORD** WBO
U.S. • 38-0-0 (29 KOs)

2 **ERROL SPENCE JR.** IBF, WBC
U.S. • 27-0-0 (21 KOs)

3 **YORDENIS UGAS** WBA
Cuba • 27-4-0 (12 KOs)

4 **JARON ENNIS**
U.S. • 28-0-0 (26 KOs)

5 **VERGIL ORTIZ JR.**
U.S. • 18-0-0 (18 KOs)

6 **KEITH THURMAN**
U.S. • 30-1-0 (22 KOs)

7 **EIMANTAS STANIONIS**
Lithuania • 13-0-0 (9 KOs)

8 **DAVID AVANESYAN**
Russia • 29-3-1 (17 KOs)

9 **RADZHAB BUTAEV**
Russia • 14-0-0 (11 KOs)

10 **CONOR BENN**
U.K. • 20-0-0 (13 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 POUNDS

C **JOSH TAYLOR** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)

1 **REGIS PROGRAIS**
U.S. • 27-1-0 (23 KOs)

2 **JOSE RAMIREZ**
U.S. • 27-1-0 (17 KOs)

3 **JOSE ZEPEDA**
U.S. • 36-2-0 (28 KOs)

4 **JACK CATTERALL**
U.K. • 26-1-0 (13 KOs)

5 **SUBRIEL MATIAS**
Puerto Rico • 18-1-0 (18 KOs)

6 **ARNOLD BARBOZA**
U.S. • 26-0-0 (10 KOs)

7 **SHOHJAHON ERGASHEV**
Uzbekistan • 21-0-0 (19 KOs)

8 **BATYR AKHMEDOV**
Russia • 9-1-0 (8 KOs)

9 **GARY ANTUANNE RUSSELL**
U.S. • 15-0-0 (15 KOs)

10 **SANDOR MARTIN**
Spain • 40-2-0 (13 KOs)

Christian Mbilli moved up in the super middleweight rankings courtesy of a one-punch knockout of unrated Nadjib Mohammedi.

Sebastian Fundora (right) rose to No. 2 at 154 pounds by getting off the floor to stop Erickson Lubin, who drops to No. 7.

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 POUNDS

C **GEORGE KAMBOSOS JR.** RING, IBF, WBA, WBO
Australia • 20-0-0 (10 KOs)

1 **TEOFIMO LOPEZ**
U.S. • 16-1-0 (12 KOs)

2 **VASILIY LOMACHENKO**
Ukraine • 16-2-0 (11 KOs)

3 **DEVIN HANEY** WBC
U.S. • 27-0-0 (15 KOs)

4 **GERVONTA DAVIS**
U.S. • 26-0-0 (24 KOs)

5 **RYAN GARCIA**
U.S. • 22-0-0 (18 KOs)

6 **ISAAC CRUZ**
Mexico • 22-2-1 (15 KOs)

7 **JOSEPH DIAZ JR.**
U.S. • 32-2-1 (15 KOs)

8 **RICHARD COMMEY**
Ghana • 30-4-0 (27 KOs)

9 **JAVIER FORTUNA**
Dom. Rep. • 37-3-1 (26 KOs)

10 **GUSTAVO LEMOS**
Argentina • 28-0-0 (18 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**

1 **SHAKUR STEVENSON** WBO
U.S. • 17-0-0 (9 KOs)

2 **JAMEL HERRING**
U.S. • 23-3-0 (11 KOs)

3 **SHAVKATDZHON RAKHIMOV**
Russia • 16-0-1 (13 KOs)

4 **ROGER GUTIERREZ**
Venezuela • 26-3-1 (20 KOs)

5 **ROBSON CONCEICAO**
Brazil • 17-1-0 (8 KOs)

6 **KENICHI OGAWA** IBF
Japan • 26-1-1 (18 KOs)

7 **O'SHAQUIE FOSTER**
U.S. • 19-2-0 (11 KOs)

8 **HECTOR GARCIA**
Dom. Rep. • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

9 **SAMIR ZIANI**
France • 33-3-1 (8 KOs)

10 **EDUARDO RAMIREZ**
Mexico • 26-2-3 (12 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**

1 **EMANUEL NAVARRETE** WBO
Mexico • 35-1-0 (29 KOs)

2 **MARK MAGSAYO** WBC
Phil. • 24-0-0 (16 KOs)

3 **MAURICIO LARA**
Mexico • 24-2-1 (17 KOs)

4 **JOSH WARRINGTON** IBF
U.K. • 31-1-1 (8 KOs)

5 **LEIGH WOOD** WBA
U.K. • 26-2-0 (16 KOs)

6 **GARY RUSSELL JR.**
U.S. • 31-2-0 (18 KOs)

7 **KIKO MARTINEZ**
Spain • 43-11-2 (30 KOs)

8 **KID GALAHAD**
U.K. • 28-2-0 (17 KOs)

9 **JOET GONZALEZ**
U.S. • 25-2-0 (15 KOs)

10 **MICHAEL CONLAN**
Ireland • 16-1-0 (8 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**

1 **STEPHEN FULTON** WBC, WBO
U.S. • 20-0-0 (8 KOs)

2 **MURODJON AKHMADALIEV** IBF, WBA
Uzbekistan • 10-0-0 (7 KOs)

3 **DANIEL ROMAN**
U.S. • 29-3-1 (10 KOs)

4 **BRANDON FIGUEROA**
U.S. • 22-1-1 (17 KOs)

5 **ANGELO LEO**
U.S. • 21-1-0 (9 KOs)

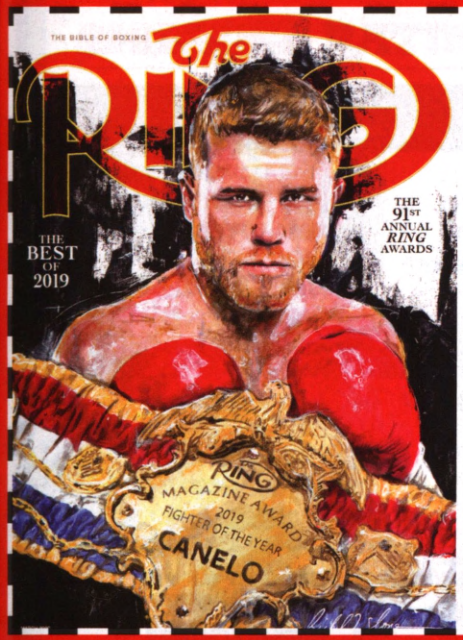
6 **RA'EESE ALEEM**
U.S. • 19-0-0 (12 KOs)

7 **AZAT HOVHANNISYAN**
Armenia • 21-3-0 (17 KOs)

8 **RONNY RIOS**
U.S. • 33-3-0 (16 KOs)

9 **MARLON TAPALES**
Phil. • 35-3-0 (18 KOs)

10 **LUIS NERY**
Mexico • 32-1-0 (24 KOs)



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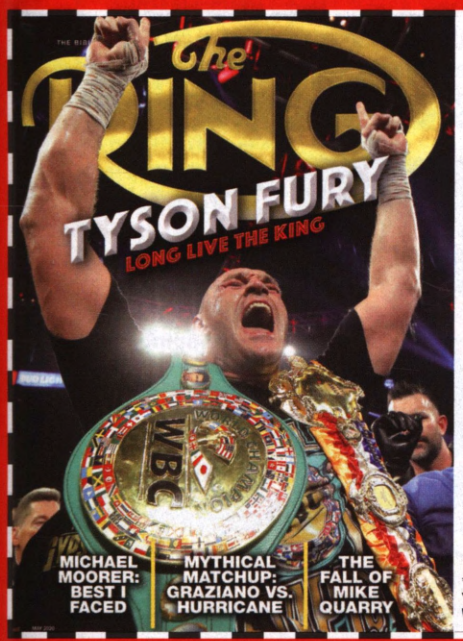

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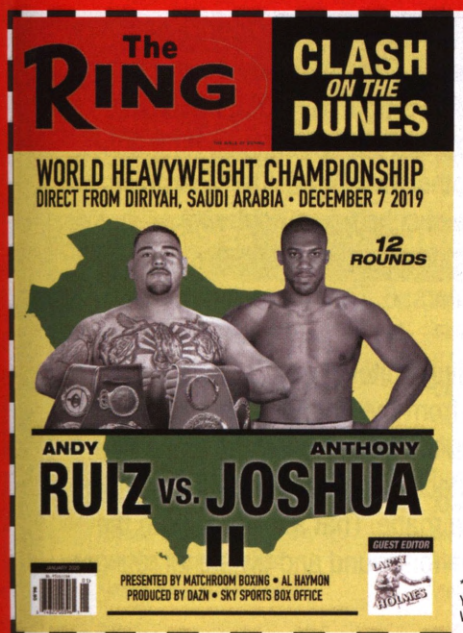

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RATINGS

Through fights of April 9, 2022

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 POUNDS

C	**NAOYA INOUE** RING, IBF, WBA	Japan • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)
1	**NONITO DONAIRE** WBC	Phil. • 42-6-0 (28 KOs)
2	**JOHN RIEL CASIMERO** WBO	Phil. • 31-4-0 (21 KOs)
3	**EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ**	Puerto Rico • 19-2-0 (12 KOs)
4	**JASON MOLONEY**	Australia • 23-2-0 (18 KOs)
5	**TAKUMA INOUE**	Japan • 15-1-0 (3 KOs)
6	**RAU'SHEE WARREN**	U.S. • 19-3-0 (5 KOs)
7	**GARY ANTONIO RUSSELL**	U.S. • 19-0-0 (12 KOs)
8	**LEE MCGREGOR**	U.K. • 11-0-1 (9 KOs)
9	**VINCENT ASTROLABIO**	Phil. • 17-3-0 (12 KOs)
10	**JONAS SULTAN**	Phil. • 18-5-0 (11 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 POUNDS

C	**JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA** RING, WBA	Mexico • 42-3-0 (28 KOs)
1	**SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**	Thailand • 50-5-1 (43 KOs)
2	**ROMAN GONZALEZ**	Nicaragua • 51-3-0 (41 KOs)
3	**KAZUTO IOKA** WBO	Japan • 28-2-0 (15 KOs)
4	**FERNANDO MARTINEZ** IBF	Argentina • 14-0-0 (8 KOs)
5	**JOSHUA FRANCO**	U.S. • 18-1-2 (8 KOs)
6	**JESSE RODRIGUEZ** WBC	Mexico • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
7	**FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JR.**	Mexico • 35-5-1 (25 KOs)
8	**JERWIN ANCAJAS**	Phil. • 33-2-2 (22 KOs)
9	**DONNIE NIETES**	Phil. • 43-1-6 (23 KOs)
10	**ANDREW MOLONEY**	Australia • 23-2-0 (15 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 POUNDS

C	**(VACANT)**	
1	**JUNTO NAKATANI** WBO	Japan • 23-0-0 (18 KOs)
2	**JULIO CESAR MARTINEZ** WBC	Mexico • 18-2-0 (14 KOs)
3	**SUNNY EDWARDS** IBF	U.K. • 18-0-0 (4 KOs)
4	**ARTEM DALAKIAN** WBA	Ukraine • 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
5	**RICARDO SANDOVAL**	U.S. • 20-1-0 (15 KOs)
6	**MORUTI MTHALANE**	S. Africa • 39-3-0 (26 KOs)
7	**MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**	Puerto Rico • 21-4-0 (16 KOs)
8	**ANGEL AYALA LARDIZABAL**	Mexico • 14-0-0 (6 KOs)
9	**JACKSON CHAUKE**	S. Africa • 20-1-2 (14 KOs)
10	**CRISTOFER ROSALES**	Nicaragua • 32-6-0 (21 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 POUNDS

C	**HIROTO KYOGUCHI** RING, WBA	Japan • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
1	**KENSHIRO TERAJI** WBC	Japan • 19-1-0 (11 KOs)
2	**FELIX ALVARADO** IBF	Nicaragua • 37-2-0 (32 KOs)
3	**JONATHAN GONZALEZ** WBO	Puerto Rico • 25-3-1 (14 KOs)
4	**JESSE RODRIGUEZ**	U.S. • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
5	**ELWIN SOTO**	Mexico • 19-2-0 (13 KOs)
6	**HEKKIE BUDLER**	S. Africa • 33-4-0 (10 KOs)
7	**MASAMICHI YABUKI**	Japan • 13-4-0 (12 KOs)
8	**ESTEBAN BERMUDEZ**	Mexico • 14-3-2 (10 KOs)
9	**DANIEL MATELLON**	Cuba • 12-0-2 (6 KOs)
10	**SIVENATHI NONTSHINGA**	S. Africa • 10-0-0 (9 KOs)

Josh Warrington climbed back up to No. 4 at 126 pounds by scoring a stoppage win over Kiko Martinez, who drops to No. 7.

Andrew Moloney retained his position in the No. 10 spot at 115 pounds by stopping unrated Gilberto Mendoza.

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 POUNDS

C	**(VACANT)**	
1	**KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART** WBA	Thailand • 23-0-0 (9 KOs)
2	**PETCHMANEE CP FRESHMART** WBC	Thailand • 38-1-0 (23 KOs)
3	**WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**	Thailand • 55-2-0 (19 KOs)
4	**MASATAKA TANIGUCHI** WBO	Japan • 15-3-0 (10 KOs)
5	**WILFREDO MENDEZ**	Puerto Rico • 17-2-0 (6 KOs)
6	**RENE MARK CUARTO** IBF	Phil. • 20-2-2 (11 KOs)
7	**PEDRO TADURAN**	Phil. • 14-4-1 (11 KOs)
8	**GINJIRO SHIGEOKA**	Japan • 7-0-0 (5 KOs)
9	**ERICK ROSA**	Dom. Rep. • 5-0-0 (1 KO)
10	**VIC SALUDAR**	Phil. • 21-5-0 (11 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED
RECORDS PROVIDED BY BOXREC.COM

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. The Ring's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the Ring title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

The Ring Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

WOMEN'S RATINGS

Through fights of April 9, 2022

POUND FOR POUND

1 **KATIE TAYLOR**
Ireland • 20-0-0 (6 KOs)

2 **CLARESSA SHIELDS**
U.S. • 12-0-0 (2 KOs)

3 **AMANDA SERRANO**
Puerto Rico • 42-1-1 (30 KOs)

4 **MIKAELA MAYER**
U.S. • 17-0-0 (5 KOs)

5 **JESSICA MCCASKILL**
U.S. • 11-2-0 (4 KOs)

6 **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 46-3-0 (19 KOs)

7 **CHANTELLE CAMERON**
U.K. • 15-0-0 (8 KOs)

8 **SENIESA ESTRADA**
U.S. • 22-0-0 (9 KOs)

9 **SAVANNAH MARSHALL**
U.K. • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

10 **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
Norway • 36-2-0 (9 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **ELIN CEDERROOS** IBF, WBA
Sweden • 8-0-0 (4 KOs)
2 **FRANCHON CREWS-DEZURN** WBC, WBO
U.S. • 7-1-0 (2 KOs)
3 **EMA KOZIN**
Slovenia • 21-1-1 (11 KOs)
4 **CHRISTINA HAMMER**
Germany • 27-1-0 (13 KOs)
5 **SHADASIA GREEN**
U.S. • 9-0-0 (8 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 POUNDS

C **CLARESSA SHIELDS** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 12-0-0 (2 KOs)
1 **SAVANNAH MARSHALL**
U.K. • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)
2 **CHRISTINA HAMMER**
Germany • 27-1-0 (13 KOs)
3 **EMA KOZIN**
Slovenia • 21-1-1 (11 KOs)
4 **FEMKE HERMANS**
Belgium • 12-4-0 (5 KOs)
5 **RAQUEL MILLER**
U.S. • 11-0-0 (4 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 POUNDS

C **CLARESSA SHIELDS** RING
U.S. • 12-0-0 (2 KOs)
1 **MARIE EVE DICAIRE**
Canada • 18-1-0 (1 KO)
2 **PATRICIA BERGHULT** WBC
Sweden • 15-0-0 (3 KOs)
3 **HANNAH RANKIN** WBA
U.K. • 11-5-0 (2 KOs)
4 **NATASHA JONAS** WBO
U.K. • 11-2-1 (8 KOs)
5 **CHRIS NAMUS**
Uruguay • 25-7-0 (8 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 POUNDS

C **JESSICA MCCASKILL** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 11-2-0 (4 KOs)
1 **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
Norway • 36-2-0 (9 KOs)
2 **LAYLA MCCARTER**
U.S. • 45-13-5 (11 KOs)
3 **VICTORIA BUSTOS**
Argentina • 23-6-0 (0 KOs)
4 **LOLITA MUZEYA**
Zambia • 17-1-0 (9 KOs)
5 **EWA PIATKOWSKA**
Poland • 16-1-0 (4 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 POUNDS

C **CHANTELLE CAMERON** RING, IBF, WBC
U.K. • 15-0-0 (8 KOs)
1 **ERICA FARIAS**
Argentina • 27-5-0 (10 KOs)
2 **KALI REIS** WBA, WBO
U.S. • 19-7-1 (5 KOs)
3 **MARY MCGEE**
U.S. • 27-4-0 (15 KOs)
4 **ANAHI SANCHEZ**
Argentina • 20-5-0 (12 KOs)
5 **JESSICA CAMARA**
Canada • 8-3-0 (0 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 POUNDS

C **KATIE TAYLOR** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
Ireland • 20-0-0 (6 KOs)
1 **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 46-3-0 (19 KOs)
2 **AMANDA SERRANO**
Puerto Rico • 42-1-1 (30 KOs)
3 **ESTELLE MOSSELY**
Belgium • 10-0-0 (1 KOs)
4 **MIRIAM GUTIERREZ**
Spain • 14-2-0 (5 KOs)
5 **TERRI HARPER**
U.K. • 12-1-1 (6 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 POUNDS

C **MIKAELA MAYER** RING, IBF, WBO
U.S. • 17-0-0 (5 KOs)
1 **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 46-3-0 (19 KOs)
2 **ALYCIA BAUMGARDNER** WBC
U.S. • 11-1-0 (7 KOs)
3 **MAIVA HAMADOUCHE**
France • 22-2-0 (18 KOs)
4 **HYUN MI CHOI** WBA
South Korea • 19-0-1 (5 KOs)
5 **JENNIFER HAN**
U.S. • 18-5-1 (1 KO)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **AMANDA SERRANO** WBC, WBO
Puerto Rico • 42-1-1 (30 KOs)
2 **ERIKA CRUZ HERNANDEZ** WBA
Mexico • 14-1-0 (3 KOs)
3 **SARAH MAHFOUD**
Denmark • 10-0-0 (3 KOs)
4 **JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
Canada • 41-11-2 (19 KOs)
5 **ELINA TISSEN**
Germany • 25-2-0 (6 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **JACKIE NAVA**
Mexico • 39-4-4 (16 KOs)
2 **DINA THORSLUND** WBO
Denmark • 18-0-0 (7 KOs)
3 **SEGOLENE LEFEBVRE**
France • 15-0-0 (1 KO)
4 **YAMILETH MERCADO** WBC
Mexico • 19-3-0 (5 KOs)
5 **JORGELINA GUANINI**
Argentina • 10-4-2 (2 KOs)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **DINA THORSLUND** WBO
Denmark • 17-0-0 (7 KOs)
2 **YULIHAN LUNA AVILA** WBC
Mexico • 22-3-1 (4 KOs)
3 **MARIANA JUAREZ**
Mexico • 55-11-4 (19 KOs)
4 **ZULINA MUNOZ**
Mexico • 53-4-2 (30 KOs)
5 **EBANIE BRIDGES** IBF
Australia • 8-1-0 (3 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **LOURDES JUAREZ** WBC
Mexico • 33-2-0 (4 KOs)
2 **GUADALUPE MARTINEZ**
Mexico • 19-10-0 (6 KOs)
3 **YESSICA CHAVEZ**
Mexico • 32-5-3 (4 KOs)
4 **DIANA FERNANDEZ**
Mexico • 24-4-1 (4 KOs)
5 **ADELAIDA RUIZ**
U.S. • 11-0-1 (6 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 POUNDS

C **MARLEN ESPARZA** RING, WBA, WBC
U.S. • 12-1-0 (1 KOs)
1 **NAOKO FUJIOKA**
Japan • 19-3-1 (7 KOs)
2 **ARELY MUCINO** WBO
Mexico • 31-3-2 (11 KOs)
3 **IBETH ZAMORA**
Mexico • 32-7-0 (12 KOs)
4 **GABRIELA ALANIZ**
Argentina • 12-0-0 (4 KOs)
5 **LEONELA YUDICA** IBF
Argentina • 17-0-3 (0 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **SENIESA ESTRADA**
U.S. • 21-0-0 (8 KOs)
2 **EVELYN BERMUDEZ** IBF, WBO
Argentina • 16-0-1 (6 KOs)
3 **KIM CLAVEL**
Canada • 15-0-0 (3 KOs)
4 **TSUNAMI TENKAI**
Japan • 28-13-1 (16 KOs)
5 **JESSICA NERY PLATA**
Mexico • 28-2-0 (3 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **SENIESA ESTRADA** WBA
U.S. • 22-0-0 (9 KOs)
2 **CHRISTINA RUPPRECHT** WBC
Germany • 11-0-1 (3 KOs)
3 **YOKASTA VALLE** IBF
Nicaragua • 24-2-0 (9 KOs)
4 **ANABEL ORTIZ**
Mexico • 31-5-0 (4 KOs)
5 **THI THU NHI NGUYEN** WBO
Vietnam • 5-0-0 (1 KO)

ATOMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 102 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **MONSERRAT ALARCON** WBA
Mexico • 17-4-2 (0 KOs)
2 **FABIANA BYTYQI** WBC
Czech Rep. • 19-0-1 (5 KOs)
3 **AYAKA MIYAO** IBF
Japan • 25-9-2 (6 KOs)
4 **ERI MATSUDA**
Japan • 4-1-1 (1 KO)
5 **NANAE SUZUKI** WBO
Japan • 11-4-1 (1 KO)

AN ARMY OF CHAMPIONS

IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S INVASION, UKRAINIAN BOXERS AROUND THE WORLD HAVE TAKEN OFF THEIR GLOVES AND TAKEN UP ARMS TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE AND INSPIRE THEIR COUNTRYMEN

By Michael Rosenthal

Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko at a press conference in front of a monument of the Archangel Gabriel, Kyiv's protector.

Tom Loeffler apologized beforehand if he became emotional during the interview. The promoter would be discussing two men near and dear to his heart, Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko, the former heavyweight champions-turned-freedom fighters in their besieged country of Ukraine.

Loeffler ran the Klitschkos' K2 Promotions during the best of times, when they built Hall of Fame careers. Now his "brothers" are on a hit list, placed there by Vladimir Putin.

The Russian president evidently wanted to eliminate any potential impediments to his plans in neighboring Ukraine, which his

SERGEI SUPINSKY; INSET: ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN

Oleksandr Usyk couldn't be more proud of his home nation.

forces invaded on February 24. That included now-iconic Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the target of Chechen assassins who ended up dead themselves.

Zelenskyy has become a heroic symbol of resistance to tyranny, a David to Putin's Goliath. And so, too, did the Klitschkos, who, along with other boxers such as Oleksandr Usyk and Vasiliy Lomachenko, have risked their lives to stand with their countrymen against one of history's strongest armies.

It was almost more than Loeffler could stand.

"I get emotional when I think about it," he told The Ring. "Here's two guys that could really live wherever in the world they want and pretty much do what they want because of the success they had in boxing and business. ... They're literally the highest-profile targets over there, after the president. It's unimaginable.

"The only solace I can take, if any, is that they're fighters to their core, as you can see by the courage they're showing right now."

The aforementioned boxers – all of whom are wealthy – have played important roles in their country's struggle, albeit in different ways.

Vitali Klitschko retired as WBC heavyweight champion in 2013 in part to serve his country, which was still evolving two decades after its separation from the Soviet Union. He was elected mayor of the capital city of Kyiv the following year, determined to do his part to build Ukraine into a Western-style democracy.

As we went to press, he was operating from a bunker, governing a city where Ukrainian soldiers and brave civilians have miraculously managed to prevent what many believed was an inevitable Russian takeover.

"Thousands, already tens of thousands are killed in this war against Ukraine. And this number will unfortunately only grow," Klitschko told Reuters in March. "We are not going to surrender. We have nowhere to retreat."

Wladimir Klitschko, who last fought in 2017, has stayed by his older brother's side and served as an ambassador for the country. He recently traveled to Germany – where he and Vitali were based during the height of their boxing careers – to lobby for more military assistance from Western European countries.

Lomachenko, who returned to Ukraine after the war broke out, reportedly joined a military unit that patrols the Ukrainian-Russian border.

Usyk also joined a defense unit but received permission from military authorities to leave the country and begin preparation for his rematch with Anthony Joshua. However, he acknowledged that the war dominates his thoughts.

He recounted one incident to the Czech outlet Profiboxing: "I know [Russian soldiers] shot at our house, broke down the gate and dragged away some of our neighbors. But I don't know what it looks like there

JULIAN FINNEY

now. We can't get in touch with anyone. It's terrible when you run to hide in the basement at every rustle."

And he told the YouTube channel Blockasset that the fate of his countrymen has put his career as an athlete in perspective.

"Luckily I did not see much of war," he told the outlet. "But what I see and what I know from my relatives and my friends is terrible. Some of my friends are missing and we do not know where they are now. Many of my relatives lost their homes, and lost their friends and loved ones.

"Frankly speaking, all that is going on now is quite horrible in Ukraine. Every day I pray for the soonest possible end of this horror. In comparison with war, boxing is child's play."

Both posted on social media photographs of themselves wearing military uniforms, their way of saying that all Ukrainians are staring down the Russians together.

One outside observer isn't surprised that the boxers have demonstrated such courage and depth of character.

Dmitriy Salita, born in Odessa, Ukraine, is a former professional boxer who now promotes world champion Claressa Shields and other fighters. He lamented the loss of life and suffering that results from any war but suggested that boxers might be seen in a more positive light as a result of this conflict.

"I think sometimes there's a stereotype that boxers can't be too smart, can't be too charming," Salita said. "You see time and again that they are, especially in recent times. The Klitschkos and [Filipino Senator] Manny Pacquiao are examples that boxers are smart, flexible people who have many different facets to them.

"Wladimir and Vitali are some of the most influential people on Earth right now with what they're going through and trying to influence. I take pride every time a stereotype is broken."

Of course, as mayor of a city that had a population of around 3 million before the war, Vitali Klitschko had already demonstrated that there is more to him than his ability to beat up big men.

He played a significant role in Kyiv becoming a livable, vibrant, culturally important European city before Putin decided he would level it. Dr. Vitaly Chernetsky, a Ukrainian-born professor at the University of Kansas, said people have compared the pre-war energy in Kyiv to that of Berlin in the 1990s.

Now, as a result of Vitali's role as a wartime leader, he and his brother have become something akin to national heroes.

"They are symbols of Ukrainian consolidation," said Chernetsky, an expert in Ukrainian culture. "Putin and the rest of the Russian leadership had the delusion that the leadership in Ukraine was weak and that the nation would be overrun in 48 hours.

SARAH STIER

Vasiliy Lomachenko's fierce fighting spirit goes beyond the ring.

[Russian soldiers] brought parade uniforms with them. They thought there was going to be a victory parade in a couple of days. The complete opposite happened.

"You really see the consolidation of the nation, in the best sense."

The simple fact that Zelenskyy, the boxers and other famous Ukrainians decided to risk their lives by remaining in the country has been a boon to morale, much as it was in the United Kingdom when King George VI – Queen Elizabeth's father – refused to flee even as London was being bombed during World War II.

"I think that's hugely important," Chernetsky said. "This is really inspiring, really motivating for the population. Having all of the people in leadership, government leaders, wealthy people, the elite, stay put and pour their energy and resources into retooling business for a different kind of production is important.

"People don't understand that Ukraine is a diverse, individualized country, different from collectivist Russia. These are individualists who in time of trouble banded together. It's very powerful, very inspiring."

Lomachenko has said he doesn't plan to fight until the war is over. Usyk, with Wladimir Klitschko's blessing, decided he could best inspire his countrymen by successfully defending his heavyweight titles. His manager, Egis Klimas, said Usyk "wants to bring a flag into a big arena to let people know where he's from."

That would be particularly poignant because Usyk has roots in Crimea, the region of Ukraine that Russia invaded and then illegally annexed in 2014.

"It would be symbolic not only of the Ukrainian fighting spirit but also a reminder of the injustice suffered from Russia in recent history," Chernetsky said.

Should Russian champions also have the opportunity to defend their titles during a war instigated by their leaders? That depends on your perspective.

Wladimir Klitschko has called for light heavyweight titleholder Dmitry Bivol to be barred from defending his WBA belt against Mexican superstar Canelo Alvarez on May 7 in Las Vegas in what would be the unbeaten Russian's most important fight, one that would set him and his family up financially for life.

Klitschko believes it's crucial that the world apply pressure on Russia in every way it can as part of an effort to end the war.

"Every sanction – and it's nothing against the personalities or athletes – it's about the politics of Russia," Klitschko told the BBC. "Every Russian representative in this case needs to be sanctioned, because this way we show to Russia that the world is against his senseless war, and there is no good in this war."

Loeffler, the Klitschkos' partner, feels the same way. He suggested that athletes should follow the lead of the Russian oligarchs who have renounced their Russian citizenship if they want to compete internationally.

Others feel differently.

Klimas is a successful Lithuanian-American manager who handles Usyk, Lomachenko and many other Russian-speaking fighters, including several from Russia, but not Bivol.

He's as horrified as anyone over the events of the past few months, saying with a crack in his voice, "Little kids, innocent people, young soldiers, thousands of people are dying. I think it's insane."

And he worries about Lomachenko and his family, who live near Odessa, a port city in the southern part of the country. He would be more comfortable if the former three-division champion were elsewhere, but he understands and respects his client's decision.

He isn't in favor of punishing Russian boxers for the actions of their government, including Bivol, who was born in Kyrgyzstan but moved to Russia with his family when he was 11 years old. Most boxers dedicate themselves to the sport from a young age, hoping to build toward a professional career and big fights.

In the case of Bivol, he probably would never again get an opportunity comparable to the fight with Alvarez if this one falls through. Klimas doesn't believe it would be right to deprive him of his life-changing night.

"I don't think it's fair," Klimas said. "I know it's been done in the past. If you want to somehow punish a country, you punish it through everything. I think sports and politics are two different things. This [is] my opinion. Why would you want to punish an athlete who's been doing this for all his life?

"It would be one thing if you would ban a whole country [from going] to the Olympics. But people competing professionally ... in my opinion, it shouldn't be done. It's only my opinion."

Clearly, the heartbreaking fallout of war touches so many people in so many ways.

Loeffler was in Japan for Gennadiy Golovkin's April 9 middleweight title-unification bout with Ryota Murata when he spoke to The Ring.

He was upbeat about his longtime client's chances in the fight and the prospect of a third meeting with Alvarez, which Golovkin has coveted the past several years. Things were good from a boxing standpoint.

But he couldn't shake the dark cloud that hovered over him. He was doing his job for Golovkin, as he always had, but his mind was with his friends in Kyiv. Boxing is an enormous part of Loeffler's life – and it remains so – but it just didn't seem quite as important at that moment.

He was too worried about the Klitschkos to function normally.

"I'm with Gennadiy in Japan," he said. "I promoted a nice show last week in L.A. These are things that you would normally be happy about. When that is in the back of your mind, that something bad could happen to one of them on any given day, it's really hard to enjoy things in life.

"Knowing the life-and-death struggle not only with them but the whole country ... it's really hard."

CHRIS MCGRATH

WHY BOXING MATTERS IN WAR

By **Major Justin Bakal**

Military experts throughout the world missed something as they evaluated the potential outcome of a war between Russia and Ukraine. Traditional Western military doctrine evaluates the instruments of national power through the acronym DIME (diplomatic, informational, military, economic). These four categories allow leaders and strategists to evaluate how nations stack up against each other when in direct competition. If Vladimir Putin and his inner circle decided to judge Ukraine's relative power through this traditional lens, their calculations missed an intangible element buried deep within the military and economic categories. They did not account for the Ukrainian will to fight, and Ukraine is renowned for its fight culture.

In early February, reports of Russian and Ukrainian relative combat power read like a tale of the tape in which one opponent had an absurd advantage in height, weight and reach. Those who focused on the numbers were predicting the military equivalent of a first-round knockout. Just as in boxing, size is only one side of the story. Beyond the science and data, there is an application of art that can make all the difference. Sometimes, an undersized opponent steps into the ring with a will to lay it all on the line regardless of the consequences. Sometimes, that undersized opponent is a dedicated Ukrainian who steps up to the heavyweight division and surprises the world. Boxing is not the same thing as war, but there are justifiable comparisons.

The ancient Greeks knew that when you have a strong boxing culture, you contribute toward a strong fight culture. When the time comes for a state to fight for its survival, citizens who grew up fighting for sport will go into battle with an advantage. Greek combat sports training, boxing, wrestling and pankration (ancient MMA) were considered crucial aspects of education to young Greeks who would someday serve as hoplites in a phalanx, defending their city from invasions. Aristotle used boxing to explain the development of courage and character. Those of us who have gone to war for our nations armed with the benefits of a combat sports upbringing went with a familiar feeling in our gut. Combat sports are not the same thing as combat, but they are related. Stepping in the ring with your gloves laced up produces a feeling not unlike that of stepping onto a Blackhawk helicopter with a rifle in your hand.

When a society respects and supports combat sports, the citizens learn to look up to their champion fighters as examples of courage and dedication. The population idolizes the fighters they watch on TV and aspire to follow their example. Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko, for years the champion-heroes of Ukraine, are now leading the defense of their country by setting a standard in courage and selflessness. When news reports surfaced about their decision to fight, despite having the money and status to escape the fighting, no one was surprised. Boxing fans who witnessed them step in the ring with so many other dangerous fighters knew that they had the courage to fight and die on the world stage. Shortly after seeing the Klitschko brothers preparing to defend their city, we heard that Vasiliy Lomachenko and Oleksandr Usyk joined territorial defense battalions. Again, no one was surprised.

If you have ever been to Ukraine, you know the pride of the Ukrainian people cannot be overshadowed by any other country. If you have ever been to a bar in Kiev, you know the people do not lack the will to fight. Many Ukrainians grow up with little in the way of the privilege enjoyed by many of their European neighbors. They learn resilience through necessity and give respect to those who can thrive despite challenges. In these cultures, the boxing world thrives. Having a fight culture is not just about building technical skills in the ring. It is the harnessing of that toughness and spirit into a constructive art. When a large portion of the society adopts and respects this art, it is inculcated in the culture for future generations. Parents teach sons and daughters about the courage and heart of a champion as they watch the fights together, and it serves as an investment in the future of their society. We hope such investments will never have to be withdrawn for a crisis, but for most nations, that day comes around eventually.

This is not an argument for Ukrainians being tougher than Russians. Russia is extremely well-represented in all aspects of the combat sports world and the people have proven their bravery throughout history. I would not expect Alexander Povetkin to back down from defending his hometown in Russia any more than I would expect the Klitschko brothers to abandon Ukraine. Fight culture must fit into the larger categories of DIME and blend to amplify other factors of information. If the will to fight does not match the purpose, it is ineffective for the purposes of national power. Muhammad Ali was an excellent example of a fighter who showed no lack of will to fight, but he also saw no good reason to apply this will to the Vietnam conflict.

Decision makers in the Russian Federation might want to take a closer look at fight culture before estimating future conflicts. There are other neighboring countries that could prove to be tougher to defeat than initially expected. Lithuania and Latvia have a disproportionate number of world-class boxers for their population size. Their society also respects and emulates the courage of their champions. When we raise sons and daughters to fight their way off the ropes, to slip, counter and circle as they jab, we are also preparing them to point a stinger missile at an oncoming helicopter and pull the trigger despite the incoming fire. Over time, when world events hang in the balance, that can make all the difference.

Major Justin Bakal is an Army Special Forces Officer serving on active duty. The opinions expressed in this article are his and in no way reflect the views of the United States Army or other U.S. government organizations. Justin grew up boxing in New York City and has competed in military combat sports competitions throughout his career, including the 82nd Airborne Division's All American Boxing Smoker and the 10th Special Forces Group Combatives Tournament.

SOPA IMAGES

FIGHTERS AT WAR

GIVEN THEIR JOB DESCRIPTION, IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT BOXERS THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE GOTTEN INVOLVED WHEN COUNTRIES HAVE CLASHED ON THE BATTLEFIELD

By Don Stradley

Above: Jamel Herring completed two tours of duty in Iraq. Right: Lew Jenkins during World War II.

Shortly after the invasion of Ukraine began, Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini took to social media and tweeted about the many Ukrainian boxers who were suiting up for battle. Several dramatic photos had appeared online of these fighters in full combat gear, automatic weapons at their side. His caveat: "Tell me one American fighter or athlete who'd do that?!"

More than one of his followers pointed out that many fighters have served during wartime. Getting the most mentions was Jamel Herring, the former WBO titlist who was stationed in Iraq while in the United States Marines. Mancini apologized for not thinking of Herring and added that his own father had served in World War II. But he maintained that in today's world, there weren't many fighters or athletes who came to mind.

Maybe he's right. Maybe he's wrong. Maybe it was just another kneejerk Twitter moment.

The truth is that plenty of boxers would probably rush to defend their country if needed, in America and elsewhere. Even Muhammad Ali, the most famous draft resister, once said that he didn't agree with the war in Vietnam, but he'd gladly defend his country if America were under attack. Ali on the front lines during an invasion? It's an interesting thought.

Throughout history, boxers have contributed during wartime. Some of them were as handy with a machine gun or a grenade as they were with a left jab. But even the bravest of them would tell you that nothing encountered in a ring could

prepare you for the terrors of war.

Lew Jenkins found himself stranded behind enemy lines in the Korean War. It was a life-altering moment for the hard-drinking, hard-living ex-lightweight champ, a guy with a right hand guaranteed to settle most disputes.

"Everybody else in the damn outfit got killed but me," he told Peter Heller, author of In This Corner. "And brother, I straightened out. I lived a different life since then. That changed me."

Jenkins served his country not once but twice. Having already seen action during World War II, including the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, Jenkins had reenlisted for the Korean conflict. He received a Silver Star for bravery.

"I'm frank enough to admit that I don't like being a soldier," Barney Ross told a Chicago columnist in 1942. "But our country needs men and that's where I belong. And in the front lines, not back teaching kids how to box."

At 33, Ross had to apply for an age exemption, so intent was he on serving his country. His enthusiasm was partly because his brothers had all been far too old to serve, and he wanted his family represented. He entered as a buck private and was eventually made sergeant.

Ross was awarded a Silver Star and Presidential Citation for his heroic actions at Guadalcanal, which included the killing of several Japanese snipers. But the war took a tremendous toll on Ross. After being hospitalized with malaria and war wounds, he developed an addiction to morphine. He'd been in the actual war for only a short time, but the grim ramifications lasted nearly five years until he sought help at a government hospital.

Reaching further back into history, there's no telling how many boxers saw combat during the American Civil War. Chances are there weren't many, for the fighters in those days were an incorrigible lot, many of them with criminal backgrounds; unless there was money in it, they wouldn't carry a rifle for anybody's cause. There was such a negative attitude about fighters that a certain Major S. G. Brock claimed in a widely syndicated 1905 article that "It is rare that a prizefighter is a good soldier." His reasoning was that fighters were often bullies and buckled under the pressures of a real ground war. He claimed to be speaking from experience, but he may also have been swayed by the anti-prizefighting sentiment that was prevalent in those days. Yet there was at least one fighter known for having served in the Union Army: Mike Donovan, one of the greats of the bareknuckle era.

Donovan was only 14, barely big enough to hoist a musket, when he joined the 71st Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment in 1861. He purportedly spent four years as a soldier; he was witness to much bloodshed, including the infamous Battle of Kennesaw Mountain in 1864. After the war ended, Donovan embarked on a lengthy career in the prize ring, gaining recognition as the top middleweight in the country during the 1870s. He went on to be one of the most revered boxing instructors in the business, serving for 30 years as head coach of the New York Athletic Club, his most famous pupil being President Theodore Roosevelt.

The Philippine-American War that began in 1899 inadvertently launched the careers of several fighters, most nicknamed "Sailor" or "Soldier" or "Captain," which certainly looked attractive on fight posters and newspaper advertisements.

Unfortunately, some fighters who had never even been near an Army base or Navy vessel also donned these names, usually at the behest of an unscrupulous promoter or manager.

World War I effectively froze boxing, with few major fights taking place in those years. From 1914 to 1918, most of the reigning champions were stuck in a kind of limbo. This war also saw many professional and amateur fighters die while serving, including Dick Burge, Tom McCormick, Guppy Thomas, Peter Robson and Bill Ladbury.

Among the most notable survivors of WW1 were two French fighters, Georges Carpentier and Battling Siki. Each received France's highest military honors, the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille Militaire. When Siki defeated Carpentier in Montrouge for the light heavyweight championship in 1922, it was truly a meeting of French war heroes. Sadly, allegations of fight-fixing and double crosses prevented it from being remembered as a noble sporting event.

In the hills of Verdun, Eugene Criqui had part of his face blown off by a German sniper. Like many veterans of that war, he underwent many months of facial reconstruction. Though it was an agonizing experience, the scrappy French featherweight credited the war with changing his methods in the ring. He explained that the war brought fighters from all nations to France and he was able to witness different styles. He was particularly impressed with American boxers, who were aggressive and used more leverage when punching.

"Their infighting was a revelation to me," Criqui told the press in 1923. "And I made up my mind that if ever I was able to resume my ring career, I'd adapt that style of battling."

Criqui went on to win the featherweight championship, all thanks to his Americanized style. He held the title only briefly, but the little Frenchman who went from the battlefields to the featherweight title

Joe Louis is honored for his meritorious conduct during World War II.

PROMO: DAVID POLLACK / CONTRIBUTOR; KEYSTONE

was boxing's top story for a while.

Though he received bad press for not serving in the first big war, Jack Dempsey joined the Coast Guard during World War II. He was quite proud of his time in the service, though it was mostly spent teaching self-defense classes and posing for photo ops. In his 1960 memoir, he recalled being invited to Okinawa, specifically to have his photo taken with a Japanese prisoner. When the prisoner tried to escape, Dempsey decided to make himself useful and bring him down. Dempsey reported his embarrassment at having to struggle with what turned out to be an elderly man. "There were no pictures," Dempsey wrote.

Gene Tunney enlisted in the Marine Corps during World War I and was stationed in France and later Germany. During the Second World War, he accepted a commission in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a lieutenant commander. He was ultimately made captain, and received a slew of medals. Ironically, though nicknamed "The Fighting Marine," Tunney never saw one second of combat.

It is probably accurate to say most fighters who have served in the military were following the examples of Dempsey and Tunney, working as fitness instructors or boxing coaches. This was especially true in the Second World War, when dozens of America's top fighters served, including Joe Louis, Billy Conn, Tony Zale and many others. Opening a newspaper to see one of them arriving for boot camp must've had a positive effect on the folks back home, though the fighters probably missed their tailored suits and expensive cars.

Louis never felt bullets whizzing past him, but the sight of the famous heavyweight champion in uniform became one of the most memorable images of the war, along with his famous quote, "We're gonna do our part and we'll win, 'cause we are on God's side." The quote became so iconic that it was featured, along with Louis' picture, on posters and news ads throughout the war. The poster depicted Louis carrying a rifle as if bayoneting an enemy soldier. The image was a bit of a stretch, but quite effective as wartime propaganda. PFC Louis was, in his own words, doing his part, "as any red-blooded American would."

Louis' patriotism during the war years was remarkable. Twice he donated his paydays from fights to war relief funds, which is doubly astounding considering he was the highest-paid fighter in the business at the time.

Barney Ross joined the Marines and fought in World War II after boxing.

Georges Carpentier was a decorated pilot during World War I.

One of the oddest stories of boxers in wartime had to do with Louis' old rival, Germany's Max Schmeling. In 1940, after he'd been drafted, Schmeling was ordered to join the paratroop corps to help publicize the branch. But by 1943, there were rumors that Schmeling had died while making a jump over Crete. When this turned out to be false, a second rumor was started that Schmeling had been killed in northern France. Apparently a dead German soldier was identified as Schmeling, but the body was so badly deteriorated that an exact identification had been impossible.

The rumors persisted for more than a year, with one Australian soldier, Private Jack O'Leary, telling reporters that he'd put the fatal bullet in Max's head. According to the Australian, Schmeling had been taken prisoner and was trying to escape when O'Leary shot him. Meanwhile, a Lieutenant Colonel Howard C. Greer claimed to have seen Schmeling's dead body in France, identified by his metal dog tags. In August of 1944, war correspondent Hal Boyle visited a Normandy cemetery where the corpses of German soldiers were being examined in hopes of finding Schmeling's body. "There were 160 of them in long rows," he wrote, "heavy with the smell of death."

The truth was that Schmeling was very much alive. He was in a hospital, having spent many months recovering from injuries received during a jump.

"I was never a good soldier," Schmeling told journalist Bill Cunningham in 1945. "I am a sportsman at heart, and there is nothing in common between sports and war. Sports are friendship, peace, and forgetting what the other fellow is. War is hate and killing and destruction."

The Nazi party had courted Schmeling off and on during the 1930s, but he had never been comfortable with Nazi politics. He'd had a Jewish manager, after all, and many Jewish friends. It wouldn't be revealed until the 1980s that Schmeling had actually protected a pair of Jewish teens during "Kristallnacht," when Nazi mobs were attacking Jews on the street and setting fire to Jewish businesses. Schmeling had allowed the boys to hide in his apartment.

The Ring named Fred Apostoli Fighter of the Year in 1943, but he wasn't boxing. He was in the U.S. Navy as a gunner. Apostoli spent 54 months in the service, ultimately surviving wounds at the Battle of Midway and earning a Bronze Star. The same year as Apostoli was honored, the Boxing Writers Association presented their annual Edward J. Neil plaque to all boxers in the military. To their shock, the total was 4,019.

Fighters have always taken part during wartime. There's no question that if America were being invaded, we'd see a lot of them trading in their boxing robes for camouflage gear.

But let's hope we don't find out.

Non-Participants
99
PIPINO CUEVAS
MARVIN HAGLER

PUSH TO START
99

BOXING PROGRAM
TOMASZ ADAMEK
MUHAMMAD ALI

A TRIPLE SERVING OF IMMORTALITY

THE INTERNATIONAL BOXING HALL OF FAME'S INDUCTION WEEKEND RETURNS AFTER A THREE-YEAR ABSENCE, SETTING UP A "TRILOGY" EVENT

By Lee Groves

As I drove toward the ramp that would take me onto Interstate 90 West on Sunday, June 9, 2019, I initially felt a tinge of sadness because my 27th consecutive visit to the International Boxing Hall of Fame's Induction Weekend had come to an end. But that sadness was instantly lessened the moment my thoughts shifted to the following year's celebration and the memories it surely would create.

Aside from the official events such as the golf tournament at the Casolwood Golf Course, the boxing autograph card show inside Canastota High School's gym, the VIP Cocktail Party at the Greystone Castle on North Main Street, the Friday Night Fights and Saturday's Banquet of Champions at the Turning Stone Resort Casino and the actual induction ceremony on Sunday under the pavilion on the Hall of Fame grounds, my fondest memories have been formed by other, more casual events. There was the process of filling my copy of Harry Mullan's The Great Book of Boxing with autographs, chatting with fellow fans on the museum grounds or at the McDonald's across the street from the venue, attending and posing questions at the ringside lectures conducted by James "Smitty" Smith (who has served as host since 2016), consuming Saturday evening dinners with fellow writers Jack Obermayer (who passed away in 2016), Jack Hirsch and J.R. Jowett as well as with Jack's wife, Audrey, and Neil "Mustafa" Terens, and especially the long evenings spent at Graziano's World Famous Restaurant & Inn after the day's official events had ended.

Little did we know that the world would be struck by a global pandemic that so far has killed nearly 6.2 million worldwide and more than 1 million in the U.S. alone. The lingering effects of the initial virus and its multitude of variants – as well as the uncertainty of when these effects would subside – forced Executive Director Ed Brophy to cancel not only 2020's celebration but also 2021's. Thankfully, the ravages of COVID-19 have diminished to the point that the green light was given to 2022's event, and because the Classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022 will be honored simultaneously, it was named "The Trilogy."

"Although we postponed the last two years, we are aiming for the same end goal as always, and that is to present an Induction Weekend for the inductees, fans and boxing community that everyone can be proud of," Brophy said. "We're getting closer and closer each day and it's a great feeling. There is a definite buzz in the air as the inductees and fans are all excited about gathering together to be amongst boxing people again and celebrate the best sport in the world."

This year's installment, which runs from June 9-12, will represent the largest gathering of honorees in the event's history, and not by a little. The inaugural commemoration in 1990 included 15 living inductees (of which 13 attended). There will be 36 inductees in the three combined classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022, of which 25 are alive. One reason for the far larger number was the establishment of two categories for female boxers (the Moderns and the Trailblazers), and this

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year's event will mark the first time these Hall of Famers will share the stage with their male classmates.

The event's sheer size and scope presented a massive logistical challenge that tested the organizational skills of everyone involved with the Hall.

"The most challenging part of the process has been planning during a pandemic that shut the world down," Brophy said. "So many businesses are all playing catch-up, and by that I mean things we would normally get in quickly are either backlogged or not available. The increased cost of many things has also thrown a curve ball as we battle back from two years of lost income. Those two factors have made it challenging, but with the support of the boxing community and our volunteers, each obstacle can be overcome. We are confident we can make the best of it. Carmen Basilio was known for his 'can-do' spirit, and much like Carmen overcame incredible odds throughout his career, we plan on carrying on his legacy and making this weekend fantastic."

The uniqueness of the "Trilogy Weekend" necessitated several changes to the event schedule. The VIP Cocktail Party and the golf tournament will not take place this year while other events, such as the Banquet of Champions and the Parade of Champions, will feature earlier start times as well as alterations to how they are conducted.

"For Saturday evening's Banquet of Champions, the Hall of Fame has scheduled an earlier start time with doors opening at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m.," Brophy said. "This will allow more time to highlight the three classes of honorees during the evening's program. We are also anticipating the inductees arriving on the museum grounds throughout the day for media interviews and ringside lectures. Taking everything into account, we felt it was necessary to slow Saturday's pace down, and it would be too busy to try to include

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Thursday, June 9:
1 p.m. – Opening Bell Rings, Museum Grounds
1:30-5:30 p.m. – Ringside Lectures, Museum Grounds

Friday, June 10:
10 a.m.-2 p.m. – Ringside Lectures, Museum Grounds
2:30 p.m. – Celebrity Fist Casting, Museum Grounds
TBD – Fight Night at Turning Stone, Turning Stone Resort Casino

Saturday, June 11:
8:30 a.m. – 5K Race, Fun Run, Canastota High School
9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. – Ringside Lectures, Museum Grounds
10 a.m.-3 p.m. – Boxing Autograph Card Show, Canastota High School
6:30 p.m. – Banquet of Champions, Turning Stone Resort Casino

Sunday, June 12:
Noon – Parade of Champions, Downtown District
2:30 p.m. – Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Museum Grounds

IN MEMORIAM:

Inductees Who Have Died Since 2019 HOF Weekend

- **Pernell Whitaker,** 55, Class of 2007, July 14, 2019
- **Jose Napoles,** 79, Class of 1990, August 16, 2019
- **Don Fraser,** 92, Class of 2005, October 30, 2019
- **Curtis Cokes,** 82, Class of 2003, May 29, 2020
- **Marvelous Marvin Hagler,** 66, Class of 1993, March 13, 2021
- **Jarvis Astaire,** 97, Class of 2006, August 21, 2021
- **Tony DeMarco,** 89, Class of 2019, October 11, 2021

IBHOF CLASS OF 2020

Name: Bernard Hopkins
Birthplace: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Nicknames: "B-Hop," "The Executioner," "The Alien"
Years Fought: 1988-2016
Record: 55-8-2 (32 KOs)
Titles Won: IBF middleweight (1995-2005), WBC middleweight (2001-2005), WBA middleweight (2001-2005), Ring Magazine middleweight (2002-2005), WBO middleweight (2004-2005), Ring Magazine light heavyweight (2006-2008, 2011-2012), WBC light heavyweight (2011-2012), IBF light heavyweight (2013-2014),

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the golf tournament and VIP Cocktail Party in this given year.

"Each individual class will be brought to the stage to accept their gold Hall of Fame ring and certificate, after which they will deliver acceptance remarks," he continued. "All the inductees understand that three classes will be speaking and, with that, we believe the program, while longer than normal, will be exciting and respectful in regards to the time. Beyond the earlier start time to the Banquet of Champions and pausing the golf tournament and VIP Cocktail Party, the weekend schedule will be the same as in previous years. There will be ringside lectures, Fight Night at Turning Stone on Friday Night and the huge Parade of Champions on Sunday afternoon among many other activities. The four-day schedule has a nice flow to it and we tried our best to maintain that for this unique year."

Additionally, the ringside lectures that often spotlighted a single celebrity in past years will likely consist of groups with common links, such as weight class, occupation, era and so on, although the exact schedule hadn't been finalized as of this writing. Smith will be the man charged with making sure all these changes are implemented smoothly, and he sees the task as a supreme test of his talents.

"Because of the magnitude of this event, because of what we've experienced with COVID, because of all the pent-up pugilistic passion, and because we will be including the women inductees for the first time, this is, without question, the most challenging hosting job I've ever done," said Smith, whose broadcasting career began in 1985. "But it will also be the most rewarding. I won't start reaping those rewards until a few days later when I get a chance to sit back and reflect on everything."

Like Brophy, one of Smith's highest priorities is to treat every inductee with the proper respect and recognition.

"The key is to balance the

WBA light heavyweight (2014)
Notable victories: Lupe Aquino (W 12), Glen Johnson (TKO 11), Simon Brown (TKO 6), Keith Holmes (W 12), Felix Trinidad (KO 12), William Joppy (W 12), Oscar De La Hoya (KO 9), Antonio Tarver (W 12), Ronald "Winky" Wright (W 12), Kelly Pavlik (W 12), Roy Jones II (W 12), Jean Pascal II (W 12), Tavoris Cloud (W 12), Beibut Shumenov (W 12)

Name: Juan Manuel Marquez
Birthplace: Mexico City, Mexico
Nickname: "Dinamita"
Years Fought: 1993-2014
Record: 56-7-1 (40 KOs)
Titles Won: IBF featherweight (2003-2005), WBA featherweight (2003-2005), WBO featherweight (2006-2007), WBC junior lightweight (2007-2008), Ring Magazine lightweight (2008-2012), WBA lightweight (2009-2012), WBO lightweight (2009-2012), WBO junior welterweight (2012-2013)
Notable victories: Julio Gervacio (KO 8), Agapito Sanchez (W 12), Alfred Kotey (W 12), Robbie Peden (KO 10), Manuel Medina (KO 7), Derrick Gainer (TW 7), Orlando Salido (W 12), Marco Antonio Barrera (W 12), Rocky Juarez (W 12), Joel Casamayor (KO 11), Juan Diaz (KO 9, W 12), Michael Katsidis (KO 9), Manny Pacquiao IV (KO 6), Mike Alvarado (W 12)

Name: Shane Mosley
Birthplace: Lynwood, California
Nickname: "Sugar"
Years Fought: 1993-2016
Record: 49-10-1 (41 KOs)
Titles Won: IBF lightweight (1997-1999), WBC welterweight (2000-2002), WBA junior middleweight (2003-2004), WBC junior middleweight (2003-2004), Ring magazine junior middleweight (2003-2004), WBA welterweight (2009-2010)
Notable victories: Mauricio Aceves (KO 4), Phillip Holiday (W 12), John John Molina (KO 8), Jesse James Leija (KO 9), Oscar De La Hoya (W 12, W 12), Fernando Vargas (KO 10, KO 6), Luis Collazo (W 12), Ricardo Mayorga (KO 12, KO 6), Antonio Margarito (KO 9)

Name: Christy Martin
Birthplace: Mullens, West Virginia
Nickname: "Coal Miner's Daughter"
Years Fought: 1989-2012
Record: 49-7-3 (32 KOs)
Titles Won: WBC lightweight (1996), WBC junior middleweight (2009)
Notable victories: Andrea DeShong (W 5, KO 7), Deirdre Gogarty (W 6), Isra Girgrah (W 8), Marcela Acuna (W 10), Belinda Laracuente (W 8), Kathy Collins (W 10), Lisa Holewyne (W 10), Mia St. John I (W 10), Dakota Stone (W 10)

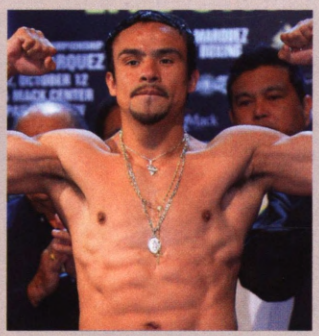
recognition of everybody that's being inducted because this is their moment in the sun and it's taking place on the biggest boxing stage," Smith said. "Because of that, you really want to be cognizant of how everything and everyone is treated individually, whether it be during the ringside lectures, the functions at night like the Banquet of Champions, and then, the ultimate, the induction ceremony. And now, with there being three classes and the addition of the women, all these factors become even more important."

Another vital factor to Smith's success as host will be his ability to maintain high energy throughout the event.

"I have to be a 15-round fighter for this Trilogy weekend, that's for sure," Smith said with a chuckle. "From the moment I step foot in Canastota and grab the microphone, it's on, and it won't stop, which is great. With all the radio and television shows I've done, and with all the hosting I've done, this is the crème de la crème. It is my job to set the stage, control the tempo and maintain this positive energy for the fighters and the fans. There is a real balancing act between honoring the fighters and entertaining the fans, who are so passionate and zealous. I put a lot of pressure on myself as it is, but as far as this event, the pressure is not the fear of making a mistake as much as making sure I'm properly honoring the fighters. Knowing this, how could you not want to step up your game? I have to have the same energy at 8 a.m., at noon and at 5 p.m. when I wrap up the daily activities. Then I have to do it again after changing clothes and hosting the evening events. To make all of this work, I have to be precise and concise. Everyone associated with the Hall runs things like a well-oiled machine, but even they are going to be put to the test."

While many of the changes will only affect the 2022 celebration, others will be permanent, such as the March 2021 demolition of Graziano's. The Oneida Indian Nation purchased the property

Bernard Hopkins



Juan Manuel Marquez

Shane Mosley

Name: Lucia Rijker
Birthplace: Amsterdam, Netherlands
Nickname: "The Dutch Destroyer"
Years Fought: 1996-2004
Record: 17-0-0 (14 KOs)
Titles Won: IBO junioir welterweight (1998)
Notable victories: Chevelle Hallback (KO 5), Andrea DeShong (KO 3), Marcela Acuna (KO 5), Jane Couch (W 8)

Pioneer: Paddy Ryan
Old-Timer: Frank Erne
Trailblazer: Barbara Buttrick
Non-Participants: Lou DiBella, Kathy Duva, Dan Goossen
Observers: Bernard Fernandez, Thomas Hauser

IBHOF CLASS OF 2021

Name: Floyd Mayweather Jr.
Birthplace: Grand Rapids, Michigan
Nicknames: "Pretty Boy," "Money"
Years Fought: 1996-2017
Record: 50-0-0 (27 KOs)
Titles Won: WBC junior lightweight (1998-2002), WBC lightweight (2002-2004), Ring Magazine lightweight (2002-2004), WBC junior welterweight (2005-2006), IBF welterweight (2006), WBC welterweight (2006-2008, 2011-2015), Ring Magazine welterweight (2006-2008, 2013-1015), WBA welterweight (2014-2016), WBO welterweight (2015), WBC junior middleweight (2007, 2013-2015), WBA junior middleweight (2012-2016), Ring Magazine junior middleweight (2013-2015)
Notable victories: Genaro Hernandez (KO 8), Angel Manfredy (KO 2), Gregorio Vargas (W 12), Diego Corrales (KO 10), Carlos Hernandez (W 12), Jesus Chavez (KO 9), Jose Luis Castillo (W 12, W 12), DeMarcus Corley (W 12), Arturo Gatti (KO 6), Sharmba Mitchell (KO 6), Zab Judah (W 12), Carlos Baldomir (W 12), Oscar De La Hoya (W 12), Ricky Hatton (KO 10), Juan Manuel Marquez (W 12), Shane Mosley (W 12), Victor Ortiz (KO 4), Miguel Cotto (W 12), Robert Guerrero (W 12), Saul Alvarez (W 12), Marcos Maidana (W 12, W 12), Manny Pacquiao (W 12), Andre Berto (W 12)

Name: Wladimir Klitschko
Birthplace: Zhangiztobe, Kazakhstan
Nickname: "Dr. Steelhammer"

for $1 million three years earlier and agreed to allow the restaurant to remain open until previous owner Tony Graziano decided to retire. Graziano, a World War II veteran and a well-known trainer/promoter/manager who worked with Carmen Basilio and Billy Backus, announced that retirement in January 2022. According to a story posted on Syracuse.com, the Oneida Indian Nation had the structure torn down so it wouldn't become a vacant eyesore or a safety hazard. As of this writing, no plans have been made on how the property will be used, but to longtime Induction Weekend attendees, nothing will replace the fun and frivolity at Graziano's that often stretched late into the night.

"I heard a lot about Graziano's before my first visit to the Hall years ago, and to see Gerry Cooney and Larry Holmes or Alexis Arguello and Aaron Pryor talking about their fights, and to see the fans mingling with them, there was nothing like it," Smith said. "Graziano's mixed the scents of oregano, rosemary, garlic and pugilism, and it was an amazing thing. Things in life do come to an end and there will be changes, but I was glad I got to experience Graziano's. Hopefully, in time, another place will adopt some of that energy, but there will never be another Graziano's."

As of press time, Tony Graziano himself is doing just fine.

"Tony turned 100 in January and he is doing well!" said Brophy. "He will be at many Hall of Fame Weekend events to visit with fans and do what he does best: talk boxing! His impact for boxing in Canastota goes back many decades and he was a great ambassador for both the village and the sport. His impact on the Hall of Fame since we opened in 1989 has been extremely meaningful. Without a doubt, Tony is one of a kind and we all love him."

Another sobering departure from previous years is due to the deaths of a number of inductees, and none hit

Christy Martin

Lucia Rijker

Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Wladimir Klitschko

Years Fought: 1996-2017
Record: 64-5-0 (53 KOs)
Titles Won: WBO heavyweight (2000-2003, 2008-2015), IBF heavyweight (2006-2015), Ring Magazine heavyweight (2009-2015), WBA heavyweight (2011-2015)
Notable victories: Chris Byrd (W 12, KO 7), Ray Mercer (KO 6), Samuel Peter (W 12, KO 10), Lamon Brewster II (KO 6), Sultan Ibragimov (W 12), Hasim Rahman (KO 7), Ruslan Chagaev (KO 9), David Haye (W 12), Jean Marc Mormeck (KO 4), Alexander Povetkin (W 12), Kubrat Pulev (KO 5), Bryant Jennings (W 12)

Name: Andre Ward

Birthplace: San Francisco, California
Nickname: "S.O.G."
Years Fought: 2004-2017
Record: 32-0-0 (16 KOs)
Titles Won: WBA super middleweight (2009-2015), WBC super middleweight (2011-2013), Ring Magazine super middleweight (2011-2013), WBA light heavyweight (2016-2017), IBF light heavyweight (2016-2017), WBO light heavyweight (2016-2017), Ring Magazine light heavyweight (2016-2017)
Notable victories: Edison Miranda (W 12), Mikkel Kessler (TW 11), Sakio Bika (W 12), Arthur Abraham (W 12), Carl Froch (W 12), Chad Dawson (KO 10), Sergey Kovalev (W 12, KO 8)

Name: Laila Ali

Birthplace: Miami Beach, Florida
Nickname: "She Bee Stingin'"
Years Fought: 1999-2007
Record: 24-0-0 (21 KOs)
Titles Won: WIBA super middleweight (2002-2007), WBC super middleweight (2005-2007)
Notable victories: Jacqui Frazier Lyde (W 8), Valerie Mahfood (KO 8, KO 6), Christy Martin (KO 4), Nikki Eplion (KO 4), Gwendolyn O'Neil (KO 1)

Name: Ann Wolfe

Birthplace: Austin, Texas
Nickname: "Brown Sugar"
Years Fought: 1998-2006
Record: 24-1-0 (16 KOs)
Titles Won: IFBA junior middleweight (2001), IBA junior middleweight (2001), WIBA junior middleweight (2001), IFBA super middleweight (2002), WIBC super middleweight (2002), WIBA light heavyweight (2004), IBA light heavyweight (2004-2005)
Notable victories: Dakota Stone (W 4), Vienna Williams (W 10), Valerie Mahfood II (W 10, W 10), Vonda Ward (KO 1)

Old-Timer: Davey "Springfield Rifle" Moore
Trailblazers: Miriam Trimiar, Jackie Tonawonda

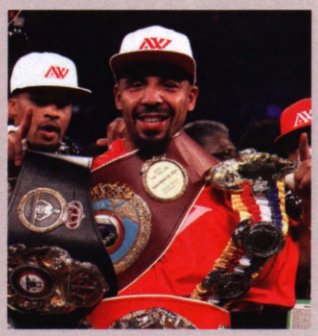
harder than the passing of Marvelous Marvin Hagler in March 2021 at age 66. The mantle of most-beloved celebrity was long owned by Basilio, a Canastota native, but after the "Onion Farmer's" death in 2012 at age 85, the crown was bestowed on Hagler, a blue-collar fighter who was perfectly suited for the induction weekend's blue-collar audience.

"Hagler was the personification of everything good about a prizefighter," Smith said. "The way he approached the sport, the way he gave everything in the ring was so appealing. And then he gave it all up, and the only time Hagler the fighter reappeared was in Canastota. He had a love and a joy for that little village in Central New York as much as anyone except for Basilio. He loved the way he was received by the fans. They loved him, and he ate it up.

"He always wanted to be the last one introduced, and sometimes when you're reading a long list of names, you sometimes have to work hard to say all of them with maximum energy and enthusiasm," he continued. "But there was no running out of gas when you know the last name that you'll read would be Hagler's. His death came as such a shock to all of us, and there will be plenty of tears when we go over the list of people that we lost. Hagler's death was a personal loss to me, and it was a loss for boxing. But I think he'll be there in spirit because he felt so much at home in Canastota."

Another widely admired figure lost was former heavyweight champion Leon Spinks, who died in February 2021 at age 67. He was a frequent visitor to Hall of Fame weekend, and although he was never enshrined, his wide smile and his Everyman charisma made him a perennial fan favorite.

"There was nobody more approachable than Leon," Smith recalled. "He was an absolute fixture. Whether he had his teeth in or not, he had that infectious smile. If you're sitting with him, you and he would probably end up closing down Graziano's. People could relate to him because he struggled like everyone else. He might not have been a Hall of Fame fighter, but he was a Hall of Fame presence. He gave people plenty of priceless moments, such as when



Andre Ward

Laila Ali

Ann Wolfe

Roy Jones Jr.

Non-Participants: Freddie Brown, Jackie McCoy, Dr. Margaret Goodman
Observers: George Kimball, Jay Larkin

IBHOF CLASS OF 2022

Name: Roy Jones Jr.

Birthplace: Pensacola, Florida
Years Fought: 1989-2018
Record: 66-9-0 (47 KOs)
Titles Won: IBF middleweight (1993-1994), IBF super middleweight (1994-1996), WBC light heavyweight (1997, 1997-2003, 2003-2004), WBA light heavyweight (1998-2003, 2003-2004), IBF light heavyweight (1999-2003), Ring Magazine light heavyweight (2002-2004), WBA heavyweight (2003-2004)
Notable victories: Jorge Vaca (KO 1), Jorge Castro (W 10), Bernard Hopkins I (W 12), Thulani Malinga (KO 6), James Toney (W 12), Vinny Pazienza (KO 6), Eric Lucas (KO 11), Mike McCallum (W 12), Montell Griffin II (KO 1), Virgil Hill (KO 4), Lou Del Valle (W 12), Reggie Johnson (W 12), Julio Cesar Gonzalez (W 12), Clinton Woods (KO 6), John Ruiz (W 12), Antonio Tarver I (W 12), Felix Trinidad (W 12), Jeff Lacy (KO 10)

Name: James Toney

Birthplace: Grand Rapids, Michigan
Nickname: "Lights Out"
Years Fought: 1988-2017
Record: 77-10-3 (47 KOs)
Titles Won: IBF middleweight (1991-1993), IBF super middleweight (1993-1994), IBF cruiserweight (2003)
Notable victories: Michael Nunn (KO 11), Reggie Johnson (W 12), Mike McCallum (W 12, W 12), Doug DeWitt (KO 6), Iran Barkley (KO 9), "Prince" Charles Williams (KO 12), Steve Little (W 12), Adolpho Washington (KO 10), Vassiliy Jirov (W 12), Evander Holyfield (KO 9)

Name: Miguel Cotto

Birthplace: West Warwick, Rhode Island
Nickname: "Junito"
Years Fought: 2001-2017
Record: 41-6-0 (33 KOs)
Titles Won: WBO junior welterweight (2004-2006), WBA

he was showing off his moves on the dance floor at Graziano's. The way he treated people made you feel good. He will be missed."

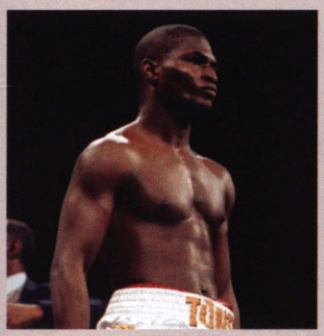
As sad as many will be that Hagler and Spinks will no longer grace the event with their presence, the return of Induction Weekend has injected renewed energy into the souls of boxing fans everywhere. One factor contributing to this energy is that COVID-era restrictions will likely be lightened.

"The encouraging news that COVID numbers have been declining over the past few months has resulted in the loosening of guidelines across the country, and here in Canastota we are at a point that, like everyone, restrictions have been eased," Brophy said. "With two months to go, we are hopeful that the good news continues and fans will be able to enjoy reuniting in Canastota in a safe and comfortable setting."

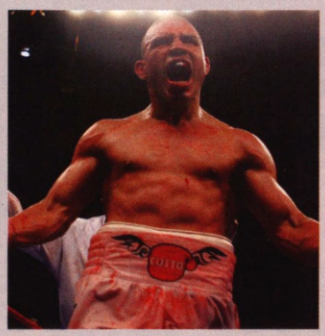
The long-awaited return to something close to normalcy will only serve to amplify the joy associated with "The Trilogy."

"People are so excited for the opportunity to mingle again in boxing's 'Titletown,' not just with so many great fighters but also with each other," Smith said. "Many of us will see people we haven't seen in three years, and they'll once again get the chance to get together, talk boxing and witness history. It's going to be a coming-out party for so many people because they've held so much in for so long. For these reasons, this Trilogy Weekend will be a wonderful escape, yet a return, for us all." RING

Lee Groves is a boxing writer and historian based in Friendly, West Virginia. He has been an elector for the International Boxing Hall of Fame since 2001 and is also a writer, researcher and punch-counter for CompuBox, Inc. as well as a panelist on "In This Corner: The Podcast" on FITE.TV. He is the author of Tales from the Vault: A Celebration of 100 Boxing Closet Classics and the co-author of Muhammad Ali: By the Numbers. To contact Groves, use the email l.groves@frontier.com or send him a message via Facebook and Twitter (@leegrovesboxing).



James Toney



Miguel Cotto

Holly Holm

Regina Halmich

welterweight (2006-2008), WBO welterweight (2009), WBA junior middleweight (2010-2012), WBC middleweight (2014-2015), Ring Magazine middleweight (2014-2015), WBO junior middleweight (2017)
Notable victories: Cesar Bazan (KO 11), Carlos Maussa (KO 8), Lovemore Ndou (W 12), Randall Bailey (KO 6), DeMarcus Corley (KO 5), Ricardo Torres (KO 7), Paulie Malignaggi (W 12), Carlos Quintana (KO 5), Zab Judah (KO 11), Shane Mosley (W 12), Joshua Clottey (W 12), Yuri Foreman (KO 9), Ricardo Mayorga (KO 12), Antonio Margarito II (KO 9), Sergio Martinez (KO 10), Daniel Geale (KO 4)

Name: Holly Holm

Birthplace: Albuquerque, New Mexico
Nickname: "The Preacher's Daughter"
Years Fought: 2002-2013
Record: 33-2-3 (9 KOs)
Titles Won: IBA junior welterweight (2004-2006, 2010, 2012-2013); WBA welterweight (2006-2007), IFBA junior middleweight (2006-2008), IFBA welterweight (2007-2008), WBC welterweight (2007-2008), WIBA welterweight (2007-2009), IBF welterweight (2007, 2012), IFBA junior welterweight (2007), WIBA junior welterweight (2010)
Notable victories: Christy Martin (W 10), Mia St. John (W 10), Jane Couch (W 10), Ann Saccurato (W 10, KO 8), Chevelle Hallback (W 10, W 10), Belinda Laracuente (W 10), Mary Jo Sanders I (W 10), Myriam Lamare (W 10), Anne Sophie Mathis II (W 10), Diana Prazak (W 10), Mary McGee (W 10)

Name: Regina Halmich

Birthplace: Karlsruhe, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany
Years Fought: 1994-2007
Record: 54-1-1 (16 KOs)
Titles Won: WIBF flyweight (1995-2007), WIBF junior flyweight (1996-2007), WIBF junior bantamweight (1998-1999)
Notable victories: Alina Shaternikova (W 10, W 10), Daisy Lang (W 10), Hollie Dunaway (W 10), Elena Reid II (W 10)

Old-Timer: Tod Morgan
Non-Participants: Bill Caplan, Chuck Hull
Observers: Ron Borges, Bob Yalen RING

GREATEST HITS: FIGHTING HARADA

THE JAPANESE STAR, WHO WON WORLD TITLES IN TWO (ALMOST THREE) WEIGHT CLASSES DURING THE 1960S, SHARES SIX PERFORMANCES THAT SHAPED HIS HALL-OF-FAME CAREER

By Anson Wainwright

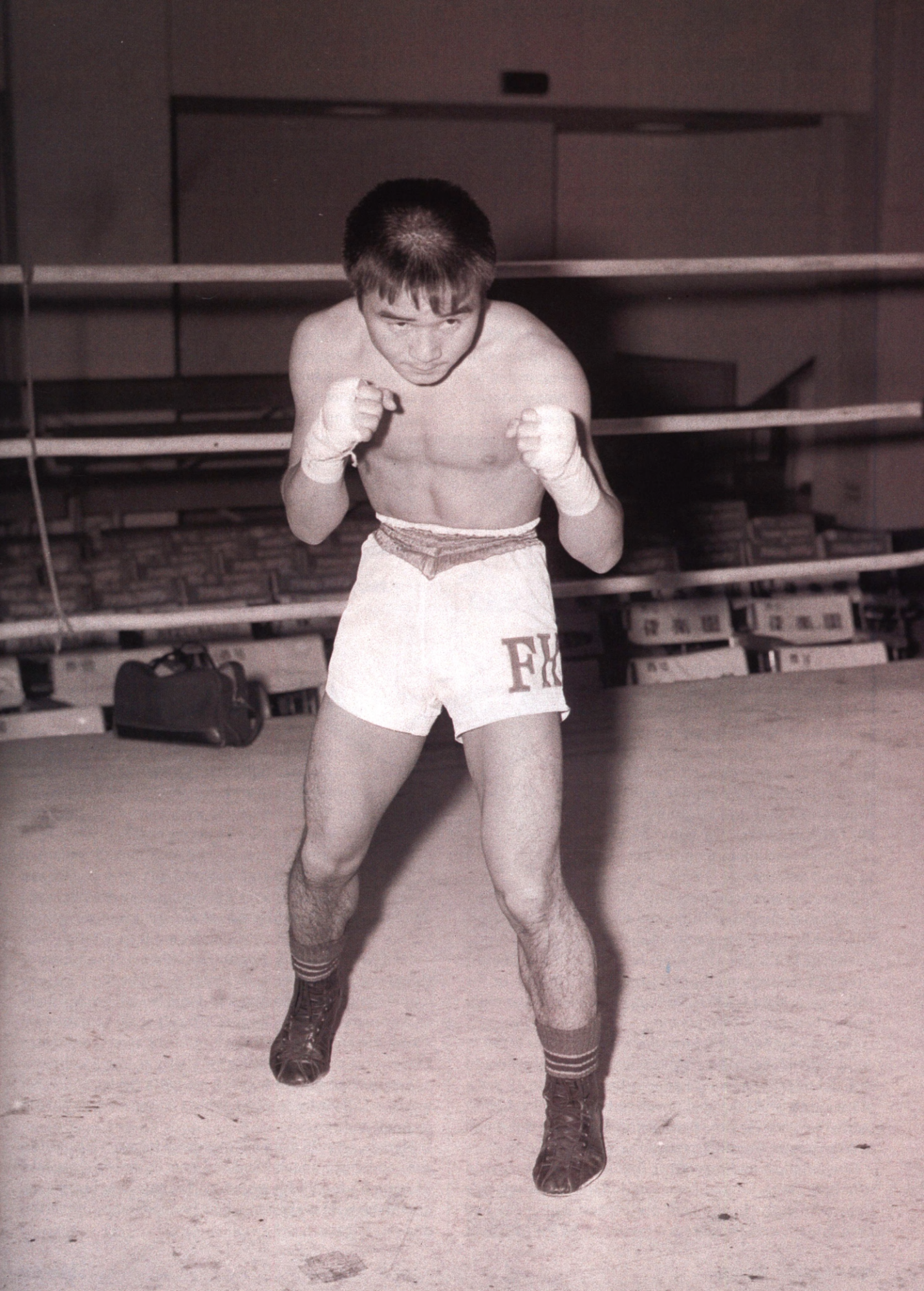
Masahiko "Fighting" Harada is the gold standard for Japanese boxers. He won a world title at flyweight at just 19 years old, successfully stepped up to bantamweight where he seized the crown from a legendary champion, and only narrowly missed winning the featherweight title during a time when there were 10 weight classes.

Harada was born in Tokyo on April 5, 1943. He enjoyed school but hated studying and came across boxing by happenstance. One thing led to another.

"I delivered rice to customers, and one day I found the Sasazaki Boxing Gym," Harada told The Ring through Hank Hakoda. "I started boxing on the bottom rung. Without any amateur experience, I made my professional debut at 16. That was slightly younger than the minimum age of 17 (laughs), and made my mind up, dedicating my life to boxing to get my own glory of a world title."

Harada won his first 25 fights, including a win over domestic rival Hiroyuki Ebihara, before tasting defeat for the first time against Ring-rated Edmundo Esparza by split decision in 1962. After bouncing back with a pair of wins, Harada challenged Thailand's Pone Kingpetch for the Ring/WBA flyweight championship.

Harada was given little chance, but he surprised the defending champion by knocking him out in the 11th round. Just three months later, the Thai paymasters brought Harada to Bangkok for the rematch. This time, the older



fighter edged matters by hard-fought majority decision to regain his titles.

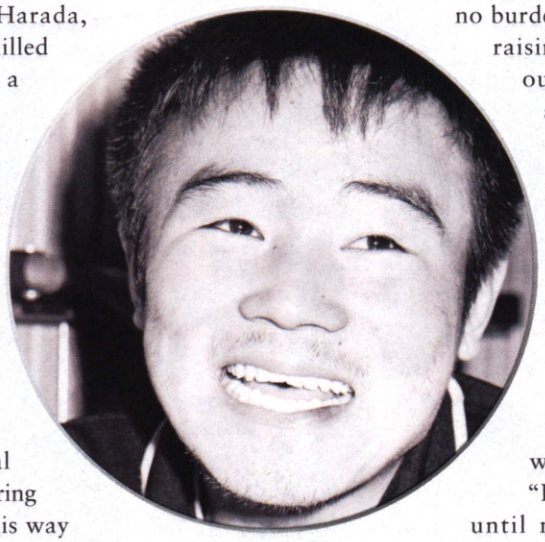
Harada battled the scales his entire career and decided it was in his best interest to move up to bantamweight.

"I usually weighed 143 pounds between fights," he said. "I needed to lose over 30 pounds for the bout. To make weight, I only ate breakfast and dinner with no rice and bread. When my weight loss process reached the final stage, I couldn't eat or drink."

The Japanese star was acclimatizing to his new weight class when he ran into experienced contender Jose Medel in September 1963. The heavy-handed Mexican dropped Harada three times en route to a sixth-round stoppage.

Harada lived up to his favorite word, "Konjo (根性)" (which roughly translated means "never-give-up spirit"), by rebounding with seven consecutive victories, including one against local rival Katsutoshi Aoki, earning a shot at undisputed bantamweight champion Eder Jofre.

Again, little was expected of Harada, but he started fast and put the skilled Brazilian on the back foot, a position Jofre would never recover from. Harada's whirlwind, all-action style saw him beat Jofre by hard-fought split decision.



Harada made four defenses of the 118-pound championship, including 15-round decisions over Jofre and Medel in rematches, before losing the crown to Lionel Rose in February 1968.

Harada, who had fought several non-title bouts at featherweight during his bantamweight reign, worked his way to the 126-pound crown. He was set to face Ring/WBC champion Johnny Famechon on July 20, 1969. However, the bout was postponed to avoid a conflict in scheduling with the live telecast of the Apollo 11 moon landing.

When they met eight days later, Harada appeared to get the better of things but Famechon was awarded the razor-thin and highly controversial decision by the referee and sole judge Willie Pep. They met in a rematch five months later and Famechon stopped the gallant Harada in the 14th round. Harada (55-7, 22 knockouts) decided to retire despite being only 26 years old.

"I just followed my heart and nobody got involved in my decision," he said. "I believe it was the right time to stop fighting. I fought a lot of amazing fighters in 10 years of my career and I devoted myself to boxing alone. I knew featherweight was my last division because I was small and the power was different.

"I wanted to end my career dignified with the world title bout, with no additional national or regional title fight, aimlessly. In the end, my biggest opponent had been myself, and I challenged myself to be the best that I could be. There are no other sports as wonderful as boxing. I have never been tempted to make a comeback. I prepared myself 100 percent every time; that was why I was smiling entering the ring. During my 10-year career, I had 10 great world title bouts with no regret. Wasn't it a perfect retirement?"

In retirement, Harada met his wife, Iyo.

"Boxing was my priority at any given time of day," he explained. "I did not think about doing anything else. Shortly after my retirement an acquaintance introduced Iyo to me. We had a wedding ceremony at Korakuen Hall: 'Champion Iyo versus challenger Fighting Harada.'"

Harada's wife didn't know of her husband's celebrity.

"I had never watched boxing live before I got married," Iyo said. "I only watched some on TV, so I knew very, very little about my husband's boxing career. Even now, I do not know much about boxing and I seldom go to his gym. Being the wife of a national superstar gave me no burden or pressure because I was busy raising my children while he worked outside, and he did not talk much about boxing when he was at home. Our two sons sometimes went to the gym when they were kids, but their interest shortly turned to baseball. Our grandchildren are not interested in boxing either." (laughs)

Although the popular Harada retired over 50 years ago, six of his bouts are in the top 25 most watched in Japanese TV history.

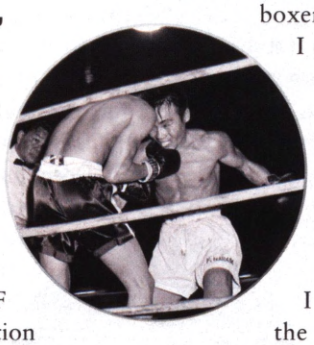
"I did not know I was that popular until my retirement, when I started walking around the city," he explained. "I lived in a dormitory at the gym even after I became a world champion, and I was pretty much in there 24/7. Even after the bout, I usually got back into the swing of things with no long break unless I got serious damage. Otherwise, I was in the training camp that usually lasted one month in Shizuoka where the gym had a training facility. I was literally separated from the general public.

"If I knew my big popularity when I was fighting, things could have been different. I might have lost my humble mindset to boxing and fans. In that sense, I have to appreciate my manager, Mr. Sasazaki, for always giving me an appropriate environment that I could stay focused on my training. He was always loyal to boxers and protected me from excessive mass media and other negative influences in order for me to secure my time for training and rest."

Harada, now 79, lives in Tokyo with his wife. He has two sons and five grandchildren and says he enjoys a peaceful life with his family. He maintains an interest in boxing and goes to his gym every day, where he encourages youngsters and stays active. »

PONE KINGPETCH

October 10, 1962, Kokugikan, Tokyo, Japan • Titles: Ring/WBA flyweight



"Everybody called me an underdog. My first world title showdown took place when I was only 19 years old, with no national and regional title experience. I got this opportunity thanks to the sudden retirement of Japanese longtime world top contender Sadao Yaoita, shortly after his successful OBF (currently OPBF) title defense. I had no intention of letting this unexpected opportunity go by. Without a doubt, Kingpetch deserved great credit for becoming the first Thai world champion, but I had no fear at all; I was so excited to fight him. I had dedicated everything to become a world champion. I honestly enjoyed my big opportunity. In the following four months, I gave it my all in preparation.

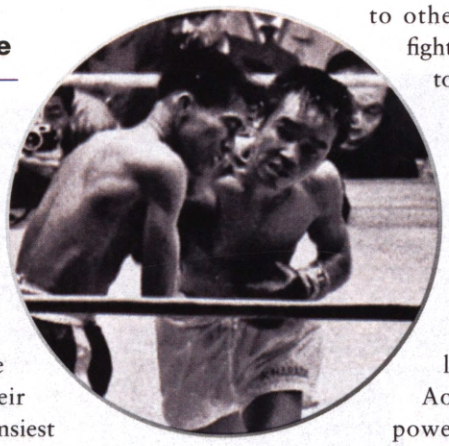
"I went to the airport to welcome him in accordance with the custom of the time. When I asked him to shake hands with me, he did not even look at me and kept talking with someone else. I realized he was obviously looking down on me. It was no wonder that the legendary Kingpetch did not care about the substitute challenger, an unknown boxer worldwide and a nobody. That being the case, my fighting spirit was highly ignited. From this uncomfortable experience, I never neglected the importance of spontaneous greetings and handshakes with any of my opponents. Some boxers become arrogant after tasting success, but I did not want to lose myself. I might be the big-time fighter inside the ring, but when I step out of there, I am just a humble person like you. Facing him in the ring, it was just my time to demonstrate what I had done. I made the best of my onrushing fighting style with a fusillade of punches that eventually led to the finish by pinning him to the corner. I do not know how many punches I threw in the end. Honestly, I was praying that he would just stay down.

"The flyweight belt used to be owned by Yoshio Shirai, who encouraged depressed Japanese people after the war. After an eight-year absence, I brought the belt back to my country proudly. For my fight against Kingpetch, I only got a $500 gold Rolex wristwatch that I still use and a Ronson lighter. I needed money to take care of my parents and siblings, but I did not ask about it in detail to my manager. All I did was keep fighting to deserve a greater paycheck, because I knew money and fame would naturally follow me as long as I kept winning. I am sure my manager earned huge money out of my bouts, but it is OK, as he really did a lot for me through thick and thin. (laughs)"

RESULT: HARADA KO 11

KATSUTOSHI AOKI

October 29, 1964, Tokyo • Titles: none



"This bout was very meaningful to me in many ways. [Hiroyuki] Ebihara, Aoki and I were considered as top prospects, the 'Three Crows of Flyweight' in Japan. Aoki was a different type of person from me, and I did not really get along with him. (laughs) On the other hand, I got really good vibes with Ebihara, we sparred a lot and rejoiced in each other's success, regardless of our toe-to-toe bout at the rookie tournament. They both boasted of their power and talent. Although I might be the clumsiest of all, I was confident that I was the hardest-working. We enhanced our motivation facing each other and improved ourselves through the competition. Without these compatriot rivals, I could not have taken every sacrifice.

"The showdown between Japanese boxers was evocative to local fans, and it was covered widely in the media. Boxing was a big sport in Japan [at this time], along with baseball and sumo wrestling. Fans really enjoyed seeing who was on the fast track in our race. Aoki allegedly spent a lot of time outside boxing, while I lived a life focusing on boxing. He had a big mouth, bragging to the media that he would floor me with no training. I took his statement as a blasphemy against the sport that I loved and a disrespect to other fellow hardworking, loyal fighters. Of course, I was not about to become his stepping stone, no matter what.

"In response to that provocation, I made a prediction to finish him in Round 3. This was my first and last knockout prediction, which eventually came to realization. Although it might look like a short, lopsided battle, Aoki's big punches were really powerful and could have sent me to the deck if I made a mistake. I really had to concentrate not to get hit with his so-called 'Megaton punch.'

"As a result of my victory over Aoki, I got my ticket to the bantamweight world title match against Eder Jofre. Also, I achieved another purpose to prove that you had to make a total commitment to yourself to prepare for any bout. My belief is that hard work makes you strong and self-discipline never betrays. The bout was selected as Japan's Fight of the Year in 1964, even though it was a non-title bout."

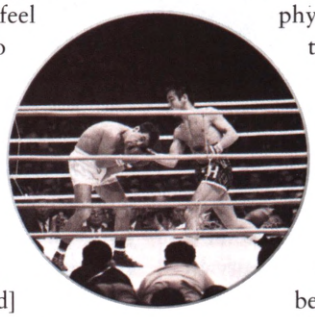
RESULT: HARADA KO 3

THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

EDER JOFRE

May 18, 1965, Aichi Prefectural Gym, Nagoya, Japan • Titles: Undisputed bantamweight

"Everybody was pessimistic of my attempt [to win a title in a second weight class] against Jofre. Knowing he was a super champion, I never thought that my opponent was stronger than myself in any bout. If you feel scared of the bout, you have already lost to your opponent. I was looking forward to facing him in the ring. One of my greatest inspirations was people not believing in me, and I just wanted to prove them wrong. I was excited to train, excited to fight and excited to push my limits. I was confident as I trained hard enough to deserve facing Jofre.



"Since moving up from flyweight, I had [tried] a variety of new things [in training] to adjust to facing a world-class bantamweight. I was doing a lot of roadwork, more than 20 km (12.5 miles) a day. I had been through hellish preparation to make weight. I was sure I would be able to make a good performance in the ring. I was 100 percent ready.

"The fourth [round] saw a really big chance for me to knock him out. That punch was thrown in the course of my natural movement – I had trained over and over. If I dared to try to land the uppercut only, it would not have happened that way. And then, as you know, Jofre unbelievably fought back hard to destroy me in the very next round just like nothing had happened. I [took so much] damage [I didn't go] back to the right corner [at the end of the round]. I learned the hard way that he was the real deal. I realized why people called him the G.O.A.T. bantamweight.

"Despite my serious situation, I somehow survived and regained my rhythm the following round, thanks to my physical strength and stamina supported by hard training and dedication.

"Jofre is an exceptional personality. Right after my victory, I witnessed the other side of him. Even after losing a professional bout for the first time, he was so polite and gentle to everyone. He amazed me and implicitly gave me a precious lesson of how a real champion is supposed to act. I truly wanted to be a good, mature man like him. That was why I could behave the same at my worst moment, when I lost my bantamweight belt to Lionel Rose.

"There was chaos in the ring [after the Jofre fight]; the audience lost their minds with an outburst of cheers and applause. Prior to the bout, there was a dispute on the gloves to be used. Jofre reportedly did not want to use Japanese gloves that were unfamiliar to him. However, he never made any excuses after the bout and congratulated me instead. We share a lot of things in common with each other as professional fighters who are loyal to the sport."

RESULT: HARADA SD 15

EDER JOFRE 2

May 31, 1966, Nippon Budokan, Tokyo • Titles: Undisputed bantamweight

"Jofre was strong in the second showdown, too, but I had a lot of confidence after my victory in our first encounter. Although I heard my fans wanted me to avoid the rematch, I was looking forward to fighting him again. I fully prepared for this bout as if it was 20 rounds with him, so as not to run out of stamina. I was sure he had developed a different fight plan based on what he had experienced in our first encounter. However, I just carried on with my boxing but in a better version.

"All I could do was to fight with all my strength, keeping myself busy all the time with a vicious attack on him. At the opening bell, I ran toward the center of the ring to take the initiative and showed my guts with the ice-breaking punches to the man in front of me. Jofre was still an outstanding opponent who was in a different league, with very hard punches that could never be comparable to any other boxers in my career. He was one of the cleanest fighters of all my opponents, without any display of illegal blows and mean attitude throughout the bout. He was such a gentleman and big-hearted no matter if he won or not, in and out of the ring. I am honored to be the only boxer ever to defeat 'The Golden Bantam' in his entire professional boxing career, and honored to get to know him as lifetime friends who respect each other."

RESULT: HARADA UD 15

THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

JOSE MEDEL 2

January 3, 1967, Aichi Prefectural Gym, Nagoya • Titles: Undisputed bantamweight

"Medel had every reason to be overconfident in the rematch. He scored convincing victories over top Japanese fighters Mitsunori Seki and Sadao Yaoita and other world-class fighters. Also, in our first encounter, he completely flattened me with his favorite counterpunch. Looking back on that bout, I was still naive at bantamweight and I had not yet become accustomed to enduring the power of bantamweight fighters. However, I have no regret that I maintained all-out attack mode, sticking to my own style to the end. Remember, I am 'Fighting' Harada, and I wanted to show the audience my aggressiveness as the name suggests. Although I had to be responsible and paid the price, I was still proud of the way I fought.

"Medel was simply better than me [in our first fight], and I accepted that it was his night. This inevitable second encounter was originally going to be held for my initial title defense [after beating Jofre], but [Medel] got injured. I was proud that I was a world titleholder who responded to his challenge.

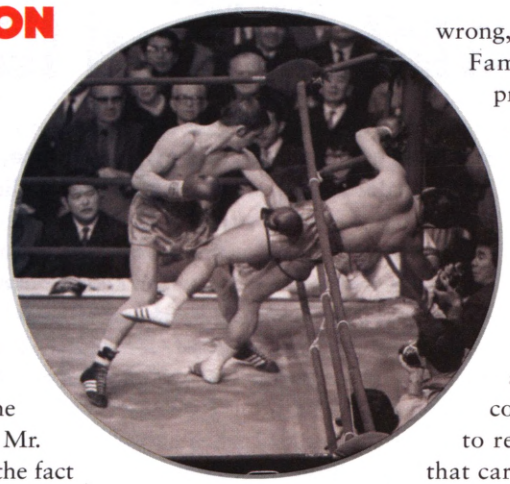
"The fact that I beat Jofre, who had defeated Medel twice, made me feel confident of getting revenge. Learning from the bitter lesson in the previous bout, I refrained from attacking him recklessly and blindly and gave him less chance to unleash the fierce punches that he had prepared. Although enthusiastic, the audience was more nervous about his occasional countering shots than me. (laughs) I knew how I should deal with it from my experiences developed through the top-level competition.

"He seemed to have run out of stamina in the later rounds. I fought smarter than the first encounter and decisively beat him to retain my belt. To his credit, Medel was an extraordinary counterpuncher and I regard him as the second-most dangerous opponent to Jofre in my career. He was really an impressive, world-class boxer, appealing to Japanese fans with a nickname of 'Uncrowned King.' Fans were really fascinated about the three-way battle between Jofre, Medel and me. Medel was a major motivator in my bantamweight era, where I had the most thrilling time of my boxing life."

RESULT: HARADA UD 15

JOHNNY FAMECHON

July 28, 1969, Sydney Stadium, Sydney, Australia • Titles: Ring/WBC featherweight



"I believe I dominated the bout and clearly won. The decision was ridiculous and the situation was hardly acceptable. The official result was scored by a sole person who concurrently acted as the referee. I remember the name of Willie Pep. Unfortunately, Mr. Pep did not value in his scorecard the fact that I dropped my opponent three times.

"I had to deal with such adverse situations in those days, especially when I fought overseas. However, I was sure Famechon knew what was going on with us, and even local media and fans emotionally supported my victory, calling me a new champion. That was all good enough for me, to see who everybody felt won the title.

"I started getting frustrated with the regrettable defeat only after I returned to Tokyo. Please do not get me wrong, (laughs) I had nothing personal against Famechon, as we both gave our all. We produced an interesting matchup with his elusive style and my onrushing one. I think highly of sportsmanship, and my fight philosophy is the winner is the winner and vice versa. I was a fighter with the all-or-nothing mindset, so if I lose, I have to be a good loser to praise the other one. No matter whether you win or not, we boxers are to respect each other when the competition is over. Great champions have to respect this sport and be a polite person that cares about others. That is what boxing is all about."

RESULT: FAMECHON W 15

Our correspondent Hank Hakoda helped coordinate and translated this feature. The Ring appreciates his assistance. Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk, and you can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright.

MEDEL: THE ASAHI SHIMBUN; FAMECHON: BETTMANN

IN MEMORIAM

A CHARACTER IN A WORLD OF CHARACTERS

MICHAEL MARLEY – A LOVABLE RASCAL, RACONTEUR AND JACK OF ALL TRADES – STOOD OUT AMONG BOXING'S MOST COLORFUL PERSONALITIES DURING HIS LIFELONG JOURNEY THROUGH THE SPORT

By Ron Borges

Michael Marley wore many hats in life, including, from time to time, a pink fedora. They all fit perfectly, as he did in the often strange and always fascinating world of prizefighting.

Marley was at various times a fan club president, collegiate boxer, sportswriter, television producer, fight manager, PR executive and criminal defense attorney. He was a Renaissance man. But most of all, Mike Marley was a boxing guy.

Marley, who died on Cape Cod March 2 at the age of 72 after a tough fight with Parkinson's, fell in love with boxing as a kid. Not long after, Muhammad Ali fell in love with him.

Marley was only 12 when he was given a ticket to a B'nai B'rith Sports Lodge dinner at the Boston Sheraton. He was there to get Stan Musial's autograph but ran into a 20-year-old guy named Cassius Clay who was as brash as he was. Love bloomed.

Marley formed the Cassius Clay Fan Club (later renamed) and had business cards made up touting himself as "The World's Youngest Boxing Writer." If you knew Mike, you know even as he aged that's what he remained. Young (at heart, at least) and a boxing writer.

Three years later, Ali returned to Boston for a press conference hyping his rematch with Sonny Liston, and young Marley called him at his hotel. They exchanged rhymes and Ali invited him up to talk, which was something Mike

AL BELLO

Marley in the thick of it at the Joe Calzaghe-Mikkel Kessler weigh-in.

was good at.

The fight was delayed, and when Ali later returned for a press conference at Boston City Hospital, 15-year-old Mike Marley stole the show after Ali invited him to the dais, saying "this little boy from Boston, my number one fan." Marley remained so for the rest of his life.

Eventually Marley drifted to a legendary place called the New Garden Gym, where he began to train under the watchful eye of two Boston legends, Al Clemente and Johnny Dunn. He boxed all over town and did well enough to win a boxing scholarship to the University of Nevada, Reno. There his life as a journalist took root.

Marley worked first at the Nevada State Journal and the Reno Gazette but longed for home, where he was driving a cab when the Las Vegas Sun tracked him down. He wrote boxing so well there that two years later, New York Post sports editor Jerry Lisker gave him his big shot to cover the Yankees (whom Marley hated of course, Boston blood being thicker than water) before taking over the boxing beat.

In those days, boxing was as significant a beat at most big-city newspapers as Major League Baseball, and Marley was built for the competition, breaking stories and one-liners with equal adroitness.

For 12 years, he covered boxing the way the New York Times covered the White House, except with a little more skepticism and a lot more jocularity. He once dusted off his boxing skills to spar three rounds with Thomas Hearns at the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City and survived well enough to write about it without needing smelling salts. Like most sportswriters, Mike was a stick-and-move guy.

One day Marley got a call he could not ignore and left the Post to serve as a producer for Howard Cosell's new televised magazine show, SportsBeat. There Marley won three Emmys and even a few arguments with Cosell.

Having not learned his lesson about life with difficult men, Marley later became vice president of public relations for Don King, a yeoman's job to be sure. There he told the stories of Mike Tyson, Christy Martin, Felix Trinidad, Julio Cesar Chavez and the other great fighters in King's stable, but mostly he told King's story, which turned out to be a good training ground for his last job – an attorney.

Marley had earned a law degree from Fordham in his spare time and after leaving King in 1997 first used it to manage Terry Norris, Shannon Briggs and King Ipitan, among others. He combined his legal knowledge, PR acumen and sportswriting connections to convince a lot of people that Ipitan was royalty back home in Africa and well on his way to becoming heavyweight champion. Those didn't quite turn out to be facts in either case, but their creation was a blend of Marley's many skills.

In later years he left boxing for criminal defense work, which some might say is the same thing. He still observed boxing from its periphery but was busy with other things, including serving as a Big Brother for a young boy from Harlem and sponsoring a number of kids in Ghana. Perhaps as good an expression of the kind of character he became was revealed in his legal mantra: "Reasonable doubt for a reasonable price."

One thing there is no reasonable doubt about is that boxing will miss Mike Marley. He was a character in a world of characters with a personality big enough to impress Muhammad Ali, Howard Cosell, Don King and everyone whose path he crossed. He was, to the end, an original. RING

NICK POTTS

IN MEMORIAM

FAREWELL TO 'THE LEGEND'

BELOVED SPORTS BROADCASTING VETERAN **ALAN MASSENGALE** LIVED LIFE TO THE FULLEST AND HAD A SPECIAL PLACE IN HIS BIG HEART FOR BOXING

By Robert Morales

To know Alan Massengale was to love and respect a man whose outgoing personality and caring for others never waned as he endured a years-long battle with colon cancer.

Massengale, a longtime sportscaster in Los Angeles and boxing commentator, died on March 12 following a fall at his home in Florida at the age of 63.

Once Massengale was diagnosed with cancer, he went on a crusade of sorts, letting everyone know they needed to keep up on their colonoscopies. On Facebook, he called it Scope-a-Dope.

This was not surprising to anyone who knew him, as Massengale was a cherished figure in the boxing community. Longtime boxing commentator Al Bernstein enjoyed working with, and being in the presence of, Massengale.

"Alan was the most gregarious and fun-loving person to be around," Bernstein said. "He approached broadcasting the same way he did life, with a personal mandate to enjoy it. Because of that, he made every broadcast you did with him so enjoyable."

Bernstein expounded.

"Everyone who worked with or knew Alan had no choice but to be infected with his joy and good humor," Bernstein said. "He was one of Georgia's great native sons. We all miss him."

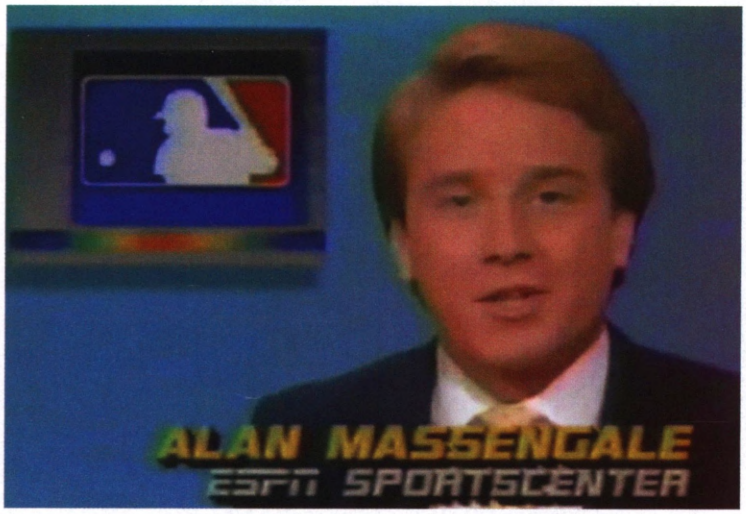
Massengale was born in Cleveland, Tennessee, and grew up in Georgia.

Bernstein talked about Massengale's approach to reporting on sports, particularly boxing.

"Alan had an easygoing, smooth way of sportscasting," Bernstein said. "It was down-to-earth, sometimes even folksy, but always sharp and accurate. As an anchor, he gave you information in a way that made you happy about getting it.

"As a play-by-play man on sports, like boxing, he did

DAVID LIVINGSTON



The young Massengale had a series of jobs that took him from coast to coast.

not try to overpower the event, but his personality came through and made it fun. Alan did all sports, but his love of boxing was unique. He enjoyed the characters in the sport and the unpredictability of the events."

Rich Marotta, another longtime broadcaster of the sweet science, was equally flattering in his assessment of Massengale.

"Working with Alan was always a positive experience," Marotta said. "From a broadcast standpoint, he was always impeccably prepared. I would see his pages of notes when we sat ringside, and he had a lot more tucked away in his head. Facts, stats and stories aside, he brought a natural, not manufactured, enthusiasm to every event.

"That bled into the telecast and also pumped up his broadcast partners. On top of that, Alan was just a pleasure to be around, to have dinner with, or a chat in a hotel lobby. When you are traveling a lot with someone, you wouldn't believe how important that off-the-mic aspect is."

Longtime boxing publicist John Beyrooty echoed these sentiments.

"He was a pro's pro, as far as I'm concerned," he said of Massengale. "He was a gamer, and way talented, knowledgeable, versatile. He was a great guy. He didn't seem to have a big ego or anything. He was just down-to-earth and funny."

Indeed, Massengale affected many – even boxing promoters.

"Alan was a gentleman," said Richard Schaefer of Probellum. "He had a deep passion for boxing and always focused on the fighters first. Truly one of the good guys in our sport. He will be missed."

Massengale's widow, Elizabeth, said he loved boxing, cars and golf. She recalled how he enjoyed talking about the boxers.

"He always tells these stories about when they were young and the way they've built themselves up," she said. "He felt like a father to a lot of these guys. It so excited him."

Massengale was that guy, to be sure.

"Well, he loved supporting anybody who loved their passion and craft," Elizabeth said. "It excited him, a lot."

Massengale's history as a sportscaster is lengthy. During his college days he was an intern and fill-in sports reporter for the Atlanta Journal Constitution. After graduating from University of Georgia in 1980, having made the dean's list all four years, he became a general assignment reporter and weekend sports anchor for WRBL TV in Columbus, Georgia, from 1980-81.

He moved over to WMBB TV in Panama City, Florida, as sports director from 1981-84 before becoming sports anchor at WJKS TV in Jacksonville from 1984-85.

Next up was sports anchor at ESPN from 1985-88, anchor for WPLG in Miami (1988-90), lead anchor for Prime Ticket Network (in Los Angeles) from 1990-95, lead anchor for Fox Sports 1 (L.A.) in 1995, as well as from 2013-15, and then lead sports anchor for KCAL/KCBS from 1996-2007.

He was also the voice of Top Rank Boxing for 15 years, as well as the World Series of Boxing from 2010-13, and was a columnist/anchor for RingTV.com. Massengale worked some Golden Boy Promotions shows as well.

Along the way, he received many accolades, including two Golden Mike Awards, which honor excellence in broadcast news.

Massengale on April 29 will be inducted posthumously into the Grady Fellowship at Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at University of Georgia.

"He was looking forward to that," said Elizabeth, who said the Scope-a-Dope Foundation is currently being created with the help of some retired sportscasters. "He was real excited to be put in the Hall of Fame at his school."

If one were looking to sum up who Alan Massengale was, perhaps it is best said by Lee Samuels, coordinator at Top Rank.

"Alan was a very unique, caring person who was more concerned with how his dear friends were doing instead of being concerned with how he was doing," Samuels said. "He loved going into a boxing arena on fight night, sitting at ringside and calling the action he saw in the ring. He liked talking about the great champions he covered.

"While he battled through pain and suffering, he never really let it be known when he was with (matchmaker) Bruce Trampler and myself when he came to Las Vegas to see us (just before the coronavirus pandemic). He was the one and only, a champion, in his own unique way. And for those who knew him, he will be very, very missed. Really never met anyone quite like him. Will love him forever."

Massengale, nicknamed "The Legend," is survived by his wife Elizabeth, son Sebastian, daughter Stevie Joy and stepsons Evan and Ethan.

Elizabeth M. Adger-Massengale said "a party" to celebrate Massengale's life will be held June 25 in Long Beach, California.

ROLE MODEL

TRAILBLAZING BOXER **RAMLA ALI** IS MANY THINGS – MODEL, OLYMPIAN, SCHOLAR, AUTHOR, HUMANITARIAN – BUT SHE'S A FIGHTER, FIRST AND FOREMOST

By Thomas Gerbasi

It would be a stretch to say it felt like 1971 in Madison Square Garden on November 27, 2021, but it did produce a smile as the crowd at The Theater in the sport's Mecca chanted "Ali, Ali."

This time it was for the New York City debut of a prospect who was appreciative of the support far from where she began her journey.

"Yeah, that was so weird," said unbeaten junior featherweight Ramla Ali. "I've never heard that before. I thought, 'Wow, this is great.'"

Fighting for the fourth time as a pro, the first boxer to represent Somalia in the Olympics was facing a brawler intent on brawling in Isela Vera, and after handling the rushes of the Mexico native and giving back as good as she got, Ali settled in and dominated, shutting Vera out on all three scorecards.

"Ali, Ali."

"Huge credit to Izzy," said Ali. "She was a tough girl. I wanted to get the stoppage."

That stoppage didn't come in MSG, but in her first start in March she got her first knockout as a pro, halting Shelly Barnett in two rounds at the USC Galen Center in Los Angeles, where she now makes her home with husband Richard Moore.

RICHARD MOORE

It's a long way from London, where she grew up, and even further from her birthplace of Mogadishu, but it's all part of the plan to not just compete in the sweet science but to make an impact. That means shaking things up by traveling overseas to work with renowned coach Manny Robles and getting looks in sparring that she wouldn't have had otherwise.

"Now that I'm spending a lot of my time in the U.S., I like the idea of being out of my comfort zone," Ali said. "There's such a huge pool of women here, some amazing boxers and amazing fighters that I'm learning from and I'm getting better from. I wanted to do that in the U.K., but there's the same rotation of girls that you spar, and I don't feel like I can grow. Whereas you come here and it's such a huge country that there's just girls everywhere and there's so many different styles and you're given the opportunity to challenge yourself against those different styles."

It's a path shared by so many boxers chasing glory, and in that way, the 32-year-old is no different than her peers. But Ali is not like her peers, none of whom escaped a war-torn nation, represented that nation in the 2020 Olympics and just happened to follow up her win over Barnett by appearing on the cover of Harper's Bazaar Arabia, one of many high-fashion accolades she's earned over the years. That ability to multitask for a living, along with her dedication to social justice and humanitarian causes, has caused some in the boxing business to wonder how invested she is in what happens between the ropes. Spoiler alert – she's all-in, and the Vera fight won over a good portion of the hardcore fan base seeing her for the first time.

"A lot of people see me, and they just say, 'Oh, she models. Can she even box?' and things like that," said Ali. "Not a lot of people know that I have to model to continue boxing because, let's be honest, women don't get paid that much. But there's so many times where I turn down huge, huge [modeling] jobs because I love the game. I love learning. I love competing. I love boxing. So yeah, sometimes it is important to win over that crowd, because then you get taken seriously as a boxer. In interviews, people would ask me, 'What are you? Are you a model? Are you a boxer?' And I say, 'First and foremost, I am a boxer.' And then everything else follows. And I'm glad that people can see that."

Ali is adept at balancing her work between high-volume punching ...

On her tax forms, Ali may list "boxer" as her profession, but in reality she's all fighter, and that was

ICON SPORTSWIRE

evident from an early age as she hid her love for the sport from her parents and still made her way to the gym to learn her craft. It wasn't something she simply wanted to do, but it was a need for Ali, who was a decorated amateur in England before her stint in the 2020 games, where she lost to Romania's Claudia Nechita but left a lasting international impact with her story. Simply put, she could have walked away from the sport and been successful in any endeavor, but she stayed, and she's not going anywhere.

"What I'm chasing is quite weird," Ali laughs. "For a lot of my boxing career, I'm sure you've read in loads of articles that I kept it hidden and I kept it a secret. So, for me, the one thing that I'm chasing is that I didn't want all those years of me falling out with my parents, falling out with my family, hiding things, I don't want it to all be in vain. I want to show that all of that hard work, sacrifice, dedication has not gone to waste. A lot of people have said to me, 'Oh, you've achieved so much.' I personally don't see like I've achieved a lot, if that makes sense. I know this is weird, but I want it to be in my hands. I went to the Olympics and everyone was like, 'Oh my god, amazing, you went to the Olympics,' and then I'm like, 'Yeah, but I didn't come out with a medal.' And so that's one thing that I'm chasing. I want to be a world champion. The belt is there and it's for the whole world to see – this is my hard work, this is my sacrifice, this is all the years that I've hidden there, this is all the years that I've had to sacrifice. This is it and that's proof."

Given all the work Ali does for others – not just her family back home in Somalia but those who are in need around the globe – through organizations such as the one she founded, the Ramla Ali Sisters Club, it may just be that boxing is something that is hers and hers alone, and that for those four, six or 10 rounds, she can think about nothing more than the opponent in front of her. That's a good escape for someone who puts it simply when she says, "Boxing is what I like to do."

But when the gloves are off, Ali's focus turns to others, and with so many eyes on her, that could be a burden. She doesn't agree. It brings to mind a quote by another pretty decent prizefighter with the last name Ali. Muhammad.

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth," said "The Greatest." Those are good words to live by.

"For me, there isn't a lot of pressure, because that's just how I am," she said. "I try to conduct myself a certain way because that's how I was raised. My mom was always so very hard on all of us. We all had to go to school; we all had to get an education, because back home in Somalia when she was younger, she was never allowed to go to school. And how we conducted ourselves in public was a reflection of how she raised us. So we always had to conduct ourselves properly in public. I don't put on a show and I don't put on a front; it's just how I am, and it's amazing to receive the feedback of people saying I'm such a role model. It's like people are accepting of your personality, and that's really nice because you don't have to act and you don't have to put on a show. When I box, I box not only for myself or women's boxing in general, for women in general, but also to show little girls and little boys who come from where I come from – not only back home in Somalia, but these small villages in Africa – to show them, look, I came from nothing. I worked really, really hard and I am where I am today, and you can do the same."

"Ali, Ali."

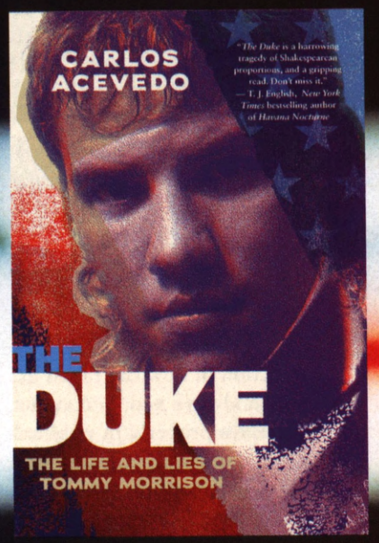
... and high-fashion modeling.

RICHARD MOORE

REVIVAL TIME

THE NIGHT **TOMMY MORRISON** UPSET **GEORGE FOREMAN**

By Carlos Acevedo



When Tommy "The Duke" Morrison scored a unanimous decision over George Foreman on June 7, 1993, he reached a peak that few had ever predicted for him. With his good looks, his grassroots appeal, his numbing left hook and his low-key charisma, Morrison radiated star quality. His featured role opposite Sylvester Stallone in Rocky V raised his profile far beyond that of the average fighter, but when Ray Mercer annihilated him in a WBO title challenge in October 1991, Morrison seemed to confirm the "White Hope" skepticism that had followed him since he first began to attract attention. Outpointing Foreman revitalized his career and resulted in Morrison becoming more popular than ever. That popularity spilled into his off-hours, a chaotic lifestyle of parties, binge drinking and sex romps. Less than six months after beating Foreman, Morrison was an ex-titleholder, the butt of endless jokes, and a man with a shaky grip on the future. In this excerpt from The Duke: The Life and Lies of Tommy Morrison *(Hamilcar Publications), Carlos Acevedo revisits the Morrison-Foreman fight and chronicles the long beginning of the end for one of the most exciting heavyweights of the 1990s.*

REVIVAL TIME

By 1993, George Foreman was six years into his improbable comeback and on the verge of folk-hero status. His thrilling April 1991 loss to Evander Holyfield – when Foreman tried to regain the heavyweight championship he had last held almost twenty years earlier – did nothing to diminish the storybook overtones of his return. In fact, he was more popular than ever. He was still a few months away from starring in his own short-lived sitcom (imaginatively titled George) and years from hitting the mother lode in the form of "The Lean, Mean Grilling Machine," soon to be ubiquitous in households across America. At the moment, he was a ratings magnet for HBO, earning $5 million per appearance for fighting the likes of Jimmy Ellis, an ex-football player, and Pierre Coetzer, a pallid South African whose frangible skin made a Dutch Masters box look like a Mosler safe.

But Foreman and Tommy Morrison had something in common. For a while, both men were part of the boxing fringes, far, far away from the marquee of Madison Square Garden or the neon glitz of Las Vegas. In 1987, when Foreman first decided to moonlight from his day job as a preacher, he was considered little more than a curiosity by networks and boxing power brokers alike. That left Foreman on the margins of a marginal sport during the early stages of his comeback, scuffling on the tank-town circuit before finally popping up on the USA Network and the casino scene.

Between televised engagements, however, there were fights in Springfield, Missouri; at the Sheraton in Orlando; out in Galveston, Texas, where Foreman knocked out an ex-light heavyweight named J. B. Williamson; at the Casa Royal Hotel in scorched Bakersfield, California. Some of these fights were shady, both in their design and in their execution. On May 21, 1988, Foreman appeared on a card in Anchorage, Alaska, which was organized as a benefit for Missing Children of America, that wound up with the charity owing $8,000 when the night was over. To add to the chicanery, the promoter disappeared and stiffed the preliminary fighters. Foreman, however, received his paycheck. And while Foreman often acknowledged that his competition was weak, some of his fights went beyond poor matchmaking. More than once, Foreman took on – and poleaxed – pratfall artists connected to the unrepentant flimflam man Rick Parker, including Tim "Doc" Anderson and Frank Lux, who used one of his aliases, "Frank 'Gator' Williams," when he collapsed against Foreman in Alaska. Then, in 1999, the Miami Herald published a bombshell exposé about arranged fights that mentioned Tex Cobb, Frans Botha, Eric "Butterbean" Esch and . . . Foreman. When the Herald contacted Foreman about a doubtful second-round KO of a journeyman named Tony Fulilangi, "Big George" shrugged it off nonchalantly. "That happened to me all the time," he said. "If they're getting a whuppin', it's up to them to decide if they want to continue." What Morrison shared with Foreman was the subterranean milieu, an amoral netherworld where fraud was never far from the murky surface. Eventually, Foreman would leave that netherworld behind; Morrison, on the other hand, would be haunted by it for the rest of his life.

With the exception of Evander Holyfield, Foreman, now forty-four, had never faced any real danger in the ring during his second act. A washed-up Gerry Cooney, nearly a decade removed from his heyday, could still bang with his hook, but he was pulverized in less than two rounds. And Alex Stewart left Foreman grotesquely warped at the final bell of a ten-round struggle, looking more suitable for the pages of Fangoria than for The Ring, but that had been, more or less, an accident, a rare case of routine matchmaking nearly backfiring.

So averse was Foreman to the possibility of competition that his promoter, Bob Arum, publicly upbraided him more than once. No matter how much Foreman was criticized, however, his modus operandi never changed, even when he won the heavyweight title in 1994. At that time, Foreman was desperate to fight newly crowned champion Michael Moorer, who seemed emotionally frail, and was willing to sue the WBA to force the bout. In Morrison, he found a pay-per-view opponent who had not only shown a wobbly chin but had also been the subject of several news features about anxiety and stage fright. That Foreman accepted a bout with Tommy Morrison suggests just how much Morrison had slipped since the Ray Mercer disaster in October 1991: He was now considered safe enough for one of the most prudent fighters in the sport. Oddsmakers immediately installed Foreman as a betting favorite.

In his best salesman voice, Foreman promoted his fight with Morrison on the basis of risk to life and limb. "Tommy Morrison is a puncher who can make you scream," Foreman said, mostly with a straight face. "I will try not to get hit. I didn't want to fight Tommy Morrison. When Morrison fought Carl 'The Truth' Williams, I didn't like what I saw. I want to stay away from punchers." As usual, Foreman was stuck in PR mode, his default setting; almost nothing he said during his second life in boxing had any relation to the concept of truth. That was another trait he shared with Morrison.

According to matchmaker Peyton Sher, who was working with Foreman for the fight, "Big George," in private, was not nearly as worried about Morrison as he made it seem, and his lax training camp, set up in Saint Lucia, proved it. "I sent him three sparring partners down to that island, and they sat around for a week and did nothing for their $1,000," Sher said. "He thinks going for walks is how you train. All I know is, if George wants to fight, as soon as he connects, it's over. But it may not happen."

For his part, Morrison played up the generation gap and even threw in a personal bit about hero-worship. "I was in high school when he made his comeback," Morrison said. "I went to Springfield, Missouri, to see him fight. I love the man to death. Everybody loves him. I'm sorry I'm gonna have to spank his butt."

Although Morrison promised a violent outcome against Foreman, his manager, John Brown, may have given a hint at their strategy when he turned to Jerry "Ace" Miller for pointers. Miller, who had guided John Tate to a short-lived reign as WBA heavyweight titlist in the late 1970s, had also trained several Olympians, including Bernard Taylor and Johnny Bumphus. "Ace is widely respected as being a genius at teaching pro boxers the lost art of defense," Brown told the Kansas City Star. "Tommy needs help in that area." In late February,

The habitually aggressive Morrison outboxed Foreman.

Morrison traveled down to Tennessee for a few training sessions with Miller. Brown also arranged for Morrison to spar in public, hoping to ease his stage fright. "The whole objective is to get out in front of crowds," Tommy Virgets (Morrison's head trainer) said. "The more he's in front of a crowd, the less anxiety he will have."

Top Rank Promotions billed the fight as "The Star-Spangled Battle," and more than 12,000 spectators jammed the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas to see two KO artists slug it out in mid-ring. It never happened. Although Morrison promised bloodshed during the buildup to the fight, it was soon clear that his public statements were decoys, of sorts, meant to keep Foreman from considering another, altogether more footloose strategy. From bell to bell, Morrison scurried around the ring in hopes of minimizing contact with Foreman, twenty years older and thirty pounds heavier. At times, Morrison even turned his back on his lumbering opponent and fled, outraging the crowd. When Morrison stopped momentarily to plant his feet, he would run off quick combinations before sidestepping out of range. More than once, he landed his thunderous left hook, but Foreman shivered and swayed but never collapsed. Late in the fight, Morrison seemed so gassed and ragged that a single pinpoint shot might have capsized him. Foreman, however, could not deliver that shot.

After twelve rounds of Foreman plodding and Morrison fleeing, the unpopular decision went to The Duke. At the post-fight press conference, the usually avuncular Foreman was pitiless towards Morrison. "If I ever turned my back and ran, they would have told me I should have never been a boxer," Foreman said. "When I hit Tommy Morrison, he fell into my arms like he wanted to call me daddy. I couldn't knock him out in the twelfth round after he had come all that way. I felt sorry for him."

When Morrison had his hand raised in victory at center ring, he was jeered by a crowd expecting more Tommy Gunn and less Running Man, but he was also lambasted by the media. Newsday reporter Wallace Matthews, writing for Boxing Illustrated, even scored the bout for Foreman and all but accused Morrison of cowardice. "Having been not outfought but outrun by a man half his age who refused to stand and fight," Matthews wrote, "there was enough ammunition for Foreman to make the case that he had been robbed." That was only one voice of many that rose to discredit Morrison, who had just notched the biggest win of his career but failed to impress the cynical press. Michael Katz of the New York Daily News wrote: "Morrison may have won the meaningless 'WBogus' heavyweight title last night, but he did not win many fans at Thomas & Mack arena against a man twenty years older."

In response to his hecklers, Morrison offered a sociological defense, of sorts. "If I was black or Hispanic, I wouldn't get any criticism," Morrison told the Associated Press. "Because I'm white, people expect so much more out of me. That's a little unfair, but life isn't fair."

The Duke was on top of the world after the Foreman win in Vegas ...

Looking back nearly thirty years later, Morrison-Foreman stands out as more than just a tepid heavyweight fight. Both men landed jolting blows, with Morrison teeing off repeatedly with overhand rights and isolated hooks, and Foreman jarring Morrison again and again with a jab that might have punctured a Humvee. Throughout his career, Foreman had been branded as having a suspect chin, and this bizarre assertion continued even after the pastings he took from Evander Holyfield and Alex Stewart. No matter what the

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skeptics said about Morrison – about his iffy pedigree, about his fugazi record, about his White Hope quality, about his Ray Mercer catastrophe – one legitimate thing, beyond question, was his crippling left hook. And George Foreman was bombarded by them for nearly thirty-six minutes. True, Morrison seemed to take something off his blows for the sake of speed and mobility (running off multi-punch combinations before darting away from return fire), but at times he dug into the canvas and shot hooks that seemed to ricochet off Foreman. Another heavyweight would have toppled from these punches; Foreman, as he had against Holyfield, as he would against Michael Moorer, remained upright. Whatever his limitations, Foreman was no walkover, and Morrison had beaten him, with a few rounds to spare. "The key was giving him head movement," Morrison said. "I watched the films and saw that good head movement kept him from punching. When I moved my head a lot, George had to creep in a little further than usual to throw. And when he'd creep in – pow – my jab would hit him. It frustrated the piss out of him."

With the win, Morrison collected a bastard heavyweight title (the WBO version, which Morrison had been unable to wrest from Ray Mercer in 1991) and earned the biggest purse of his career – somewhere in the range of $2 million. His stop-and-go strategy put a momentary dent into his reputation as a thrill-maker in the ring, but beating Foreman vaulted him into the mix with the biggest names in the division: Riddick Bowe, Lennox Lewis, Evander Holyfield. Facing Morrison was a risk – he still had a pulverizing left hook – but his status as a box-office draw meant he was worth millions in a pay-per-view setting, and his vulnerabilities gave top heavyweights a decided advantage. Bowe and Lewis, in particular, were eager to tangle with Morrison, now more in demand than he had been as an undefeated Hollywood bit player.

Morrison also enhanced his star appeal to his preferred demographic: women. While not exactly out of circulation when training for Foreman, Morrison took his camp seriously – in his fashion. That meant consulting with Ace Miller, sequestering himself at an Air Force Academy base, possibly injecting more steroids. In the weeks after beating Foreman, Morrison went on a lechery spree. Morrison bar-hopped and bed-hopped through the blue hours in Westport, Kansas City, accompanied by a famished entourage eager to split the leftover spoils from associating with a genuine local hero. Even with fame and money, Morrison was less than discriminating about his cravings. According to an article in the Kansas City Star, Morrison was not above partying in a seedy hot-sheets motel, where registered guests comprised an informal listing of select lowlife in "The Paris of the Plains." The Star quoted a former motel night manager about the comings and goings of Morrison, a heavyweight title claimant who had just added millions to his bank account. "We were surprised to see him," said the night manager. "Why would he be in a place like that, with such scuzzy trash? The place was a whorehouse with drugs. I don't know that he did drugs, but I know the girls did."

In boxing, some wins make you look bad, and some wins make you look good. Revisionist history is often only one or two fights away for a boxer. When Foreman went on to win the genuine heavyweight championship of the world in his next start by flattening the undefeated Michael Moorer, it made Morrison shine in retrospect. Of course, by then, Morrison was already trying to pick up the pieces of his career all over again.

... and the fall was not far behind.

RQ1

OWN YOUR FIGHT WITH ROOQ

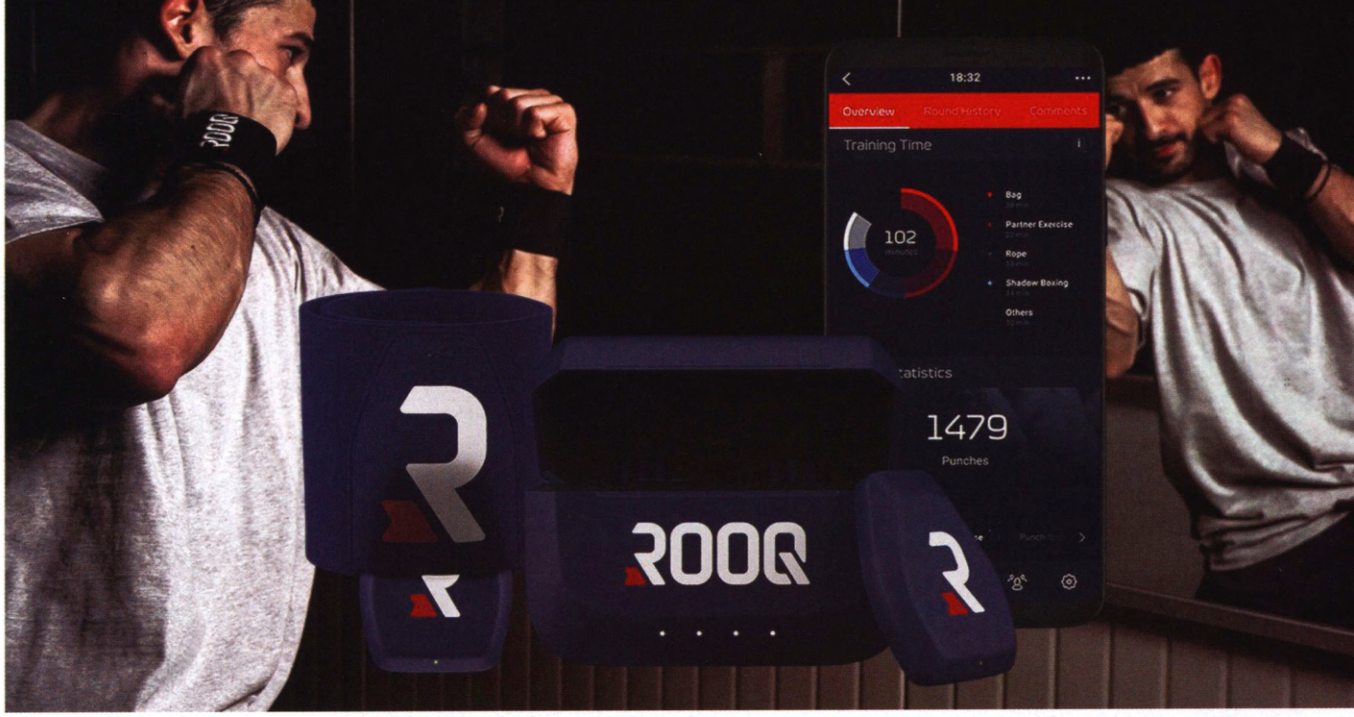
LEGENDARY FORMER LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION HENRY MASKE ENDORSES ROOQ'S CUTTING-EDGE BOXING TECHNOLOGY

Two years ago former light heavyweight champ Henry Maske contacted Ralf Rüttgers – a former amateur boxer-turned-mathematician and the founder of ROOQ – to set up his visit to the Aachen, Germany-based company to experience for himself the technology he had read about in an article.

Maske, a 1988 Olympic gold medalist and one of Germany's most popular sports figures, put the ROOQ sensors through a two-hour training session of shadowboxing and heavy bag work while wearing different-sized gloves and changing his punch speeds and combinations.

To Maske's amazement, every punch – each jab, hook, cross, uppercut and body shot – that he threw during his session was recorded as well as the hand (left or right) and distance (close, mid-range, outside) it was delivered from. The speed and force of each punch was also recorded, along with the specific combinations and the total punch count. The tiny ROOQ sensors, which fit inside comfortable wristbands, recognized when Maske skipped rope, shadowboxed and when he hit the focus mitts or the heavy bag.

Maske was so impressed with the accuracy of ROOQ's movement-measurement technology that he became a partner in the company as its Chief Sports Officer. As a product of the advanced sports science systems that made East Germany an Olympic powerhouse in every sport during the 1970s and '80s, Maske appreciated the instant performance analysis that ROOQ provided



and he viewed it as a potentially revolutionary tool in boxing training.

"Even in the '70s and '80s, East Germany had sports-evaluation technology and training methods that are still not used today, such as using a photoelectric camera to measure speed," Maske said. "But everything had to be done in a laboratory setting. The process was time-consuming, and results came much later – days or even weeks later.

"ROOQ gives you all of that data in your hands, and in real time. My former boxing trainer would have loved to have this technology. I'm sure he would have loved to have come up with such technology, but he didn't have the mathematical mind for the sport like Ralf does. Ralf boxed, he trained in boxing, and he cares about the sport. The sport is lucky to have someone like him, because this technology will finally advance boxing training into the digital world."

ROOQ combines sport and technology, making boxing-specific performance measurable.

Maske won the IBF light

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COACHING ZONE

Overview - analysis - control: With the world's first digital coaching zone for boxing the coach brings truth to the ring. The ROOQ coach portal is an innovative digital support to track and evaluate the performance of the athletes with data and facts at any time and regardless of location. The athletes share their training data with their coaches, so the coaches can keep an overview and develop their athletes even more specifically in the long term.

- Optimized training planning and control – complete overview of all registered athletes
- Commenting on training results
- Create and send individual training plans and transfer them to the athlete's ROOQ app

ROOQ
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VISION

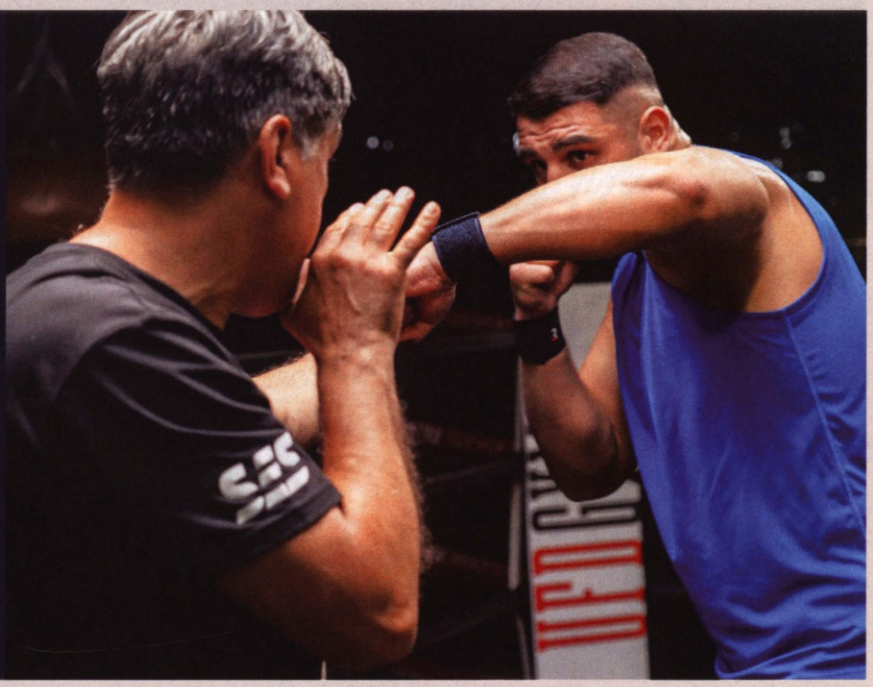
With the ROOQ technology, every boxer and coach will have the opportunity to measure and optimize their performance individually.

The ROOQ team has one big goal: It wants to make the attractiveness and fascination of this great sport more transparent.

MISSION

We combine sport and technology, make boxing-specific performance measurable and sustainably visible.

Our visionary technology for training analysis is aimed not only at professional athletes and elite coaches, but also at every athlete.



heavyweight title from respected veteran Prince Charles Williams in 1993 and made 10 defenses over the next three years, including victories over three-division titleholder Iran Barkley and former 168-pound beltholder Graciano Rocchigiani (twice).

His fights filled major arenas throughout Germany and averaged 17-20 million households on the RTL network. By all accounts, Maske's amateur and professional careers were near perfect, and he admits that he strived for perfection in his preparation.

"I knew I didn't have much athletic talent," he said. "My talent was in my head. I wanted to win and I was very critical of myself. I was always thinking about how I could improve and how I would win. I always analyzed myself."

Maske would have embraced ROOQ during his boxing competition years.

"I would have embraced this technology because it gives the boxer unbelievable clarity," Maske said. "A boxer is not really sure of his capability or limits. It is the coach's job to help the boxer realize his potential, to strengthen the boxer's

weaknesses and shortcomings.

"But sometimes the coach misses things, or sometimes the athlete doesn't see what the coach sees. The great fighters can overcome this due to talent, but there are a lot of good boxers who fall short because they are not on the same page with their trainers. ROOQ gives the coach and the trainer the facts; they both see the same information."

One of ROOQ's functions is the Coaching Zone, an online portal specifically geared towards the needs of the boxing trainer. All of the training statistics generated by the boxer is recorded via an app and cloud database, and the data can be made available to their coaches (given their approval).

"This is comparable to runners who naturally record their runs with an app or smartwatch," said Maske. "For the boxing coach, this results in a concrete performance analysis.

"As an athlete, I knew my body was my tool, but it had to be fit. And my coach made sure of that. With the Coaching Zone function, we have the same information. We share it with the coach, who can make adjustments."

"We are certain that the ROOQ sensors will soon be used as a natural training tool, as essential as the boxing gloves themselves," added Rüttgers, who is also CEO of the company.

Maske was satisfied with the results of his technical boxing style but he believes he would have been a better athlete – and maybe a little more exciting – if he and his coach had ROOQ technology to train with during his boxing years.

"I think it would have encouraged me to put a little more power into my punches," he said. "I may have scored a few more knockouts, although RTL may not have liked that (laughs). They liked it when I went all 12 rounds, more air time for commercials."

Maske believes the ultimate potential of ROOQ goes far beyond boxing and even sports.

"Being a former boxer, Ralf started with boxing, but the technology is movement based, so it can be applied to other sports. I believe major MMA and boxing promotional companies will soon become partners with ROOQ, but I see the entire fitness industry eventually adopting the ROOQ system. It has huge potential."

For more information on ROOQ's cutting-edge technology and its many training applications, and to order a ROOQ BOX, please visit the official website rooq.de.

WORLD BEAT

Josh Warrington resurrected his career with a world title triumph over Kiko Martinez in Leeds.

U.K.

BY GARETH A DAVIES

Featherweights Josh Warrington and Leigh Wood look to be on a collision course – both are promoted by Eddie Hearn – after rousing victories in Leeds and Nottingham, respectively, in the space of a fortnight in March. That said, the extremely popular Warrington, who defeated Kiko Martinez for the second time in his career to regain the IBF belt he had relinquished in lockdown for broader pastures, stressed his long-held desire for a fight in the United States, potentially against Leo Santa Cruz.

But the fight with Wood could herald a major night with both fighters enjoying deep support in their cities. Wood, though, produced a late, late show against Michael Conlan, who was taken to the hospital for precautionary measures after a brutal 12th-round knockout that saw the Belfast fighter worryingly collapse unconscious through the ropes to the floor in one of those moments when all observers collectively hold their breath in concern for the fighter.

But the final seconds of that final stanza between Wood and Conlan after an intensely fought contest saw the home fighter retain his secondary WBA featherweight title in a dramatic rescue act. Conlan, whose body and arms went limp as he fell backward out of the ring, was immediately attended to by medics, taken to the hospital overnight on precautionary grounds for a brain scan but later released after being given the all-clear.

It was a dramatic, thrilling fight nonetheless, with Conlan ahead throughout the bout but Wood forcing his way back into the battle after being flattened himself late in the opening round. The champion showed the heart of a lion, pushing the contest into a dogfight, using his physicality against the ring smarts of the southpaw Conlan, who was ahead on the cards until the dramatic denouement. It remains an early fight of the year contender for its relentless vigor and show-stopping finale. Oh, how the championship rounds can be so telling. It would be no surprise, either, to see the pair wind it back for a second encounter.

Attention then turned to Warrington just 14 days later, the popular Leeds fighter reclaiming the IBF featherweight title with a seventh-round stoppage over Martinez and showing that after two fights with Mauricio Lara – a stoppage loss and a technical draw on cuts sustained by the Mexican – that his ambition remains undaunted and that he is rejuvenated (though that must be seen in the context of a fight-worn 36-year-old Martinez, who has been through a decade of wars at the top level).

Warrington, to give him his due, set about Martinez impressively with spite and desire from the outset, never letting the dangerous Spaniard settle and breaking his foe down and finishing the contest with an assault of over 20 unanswered punches before the merciful stoppage by referee Marcus McDonnell in the seventh round. The downside for Warrington was that he sustained a broken jaw – and hand – with his mandibula operated on 24 hours later.

Promoter Hearn will look to the USA for a Warrington sojourn, but Wood is there as an option and a clear money-spinner that could attract an estimated 30,000 fans in an all-British showdown. "I can see 20,000 of Josh's fans heading for Las Vegas," said Hearn, aware that Warrington's fervent support would travel for the fighter who has had 12 of his last 15 fights in Leeds and is a

Leigh Wood was behind when he scored a dramatic late stoppage over Michael Conlan.

WARRINGTON: MARTIN RICKETT; WOODS: NIGEL ROBERTS

local icon. "Maybe that's not quite in the dimension of Ricky Hatton's 30,000 for his big fights there against Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, but it will make for a scene along The Strip." Potential opponents in unification bouts for the 31-year-old include WBA featherweight titleholder Leo Santa Cruz, who indulged in two memorable wars with Carl Frampton, or WBO king Emanuel Navarrete. Both Mexicans would provide intriguing challenges for Warrington and enhance his legacy. Warrington has even said that he would go to Mexico if the challenge were viable there.

Earlier in Leeds, Australian Ebanie Bridges, who has made the U.K. her home training under Mark Tibbs and is a Leeds United fan, which also made her growing popularity in fight week more intense, had claimed the women's IBF bantamweight title with a points victory over Argentina's Maria Cecilia Roman.

Also in the women's realm, Savannah Marshall is now set for an era-defining blockbuster collision with longtime American rival Claressa Shields after the Hartlepool boxer retained her WBO middleweight crown against Belgian opponent Femke Hermans in Newcastle. Marshall made a huge statement with a stunning left-hook knockout of Hermans in the third round, moving her undefeated record to 12-0 with her 10th KO. It sets up a classic puncher-versus-boxer encounter, at least on paper. Hermans went 10 rounds with Shields, and indeed, in 2020, when Marshall won the WBO middleweight title, she stopped Hannah Rankin in seven rounds. Rankin, too, went 10 rounds with Shields, who has barely lost a round in her career.

It laid down a marker, as Marshall looks to inflict just a second defeat on two-time Olympic gold medalist and three-weight world champion Shields. Marshall remains the only fighter to have beaten Shields in the ring, at the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships, becoming the world's No. 1 in 2011. But then, just a few months later, it was then-teenager Shields who took the first women's Olympic middleweight gold in London while Marshall lost on points to Marina Volnova of Kazakhstan in her opening quarterfinal bout.

The 10-year rivalry will come to a head in the U.K. this summer, "The Silent Assassin" Marshall insisting after the Hermans victory that the fight with "The GWOAT" will happen in her backyard – the North West of England. No doubt it will.

Elsewhere, Sunny Edwards retained his IBF flyweight title with victory over Pakistan's Muhammad Waseem in Dubai by unanimous decision to set up another intriguing contest against WBC counterpart Julio Cesar Martinez. As we know, blood is thicker than water. Martinez fought Edwards' brother Charlie in August 2019 in London. The WBC title bout was originally ruled a third-round KO win for the Mexican challenger but was later ruled a no-contest because of a late hit Charlie took while on one knee. Sunny Edwards loves to rail against opponents, and Martinez, in spite of his schooling at the hands of the brilliant "Chocolatito" Gonzalez (on very short notice) brings spite and heavy hands. Another one for Mr. Hearn to get over the line.

Savannah Marshall is on a collision course with the self-proclaimed GWOAT.

NIGEL RODDIS

JAPAN

BY YURIKO MIYATA

The Japan Boxing Commission (JBC) dissolved after exactly 70 years of regulating the professional sport nationwide, it was announced on March 31, right after the

Naoya Inoue and Nonito Donaire are set to repeat their 2019 Fight of the Year.

final meeting of the board. The organization failed to meet fiscal criteria to continue being a general incorporated foundation. Actually, it was bankrupt.

With the first-ever world title bout in Japan, in May 1952 (flyweights Yoshio Shirai and Dado Marino), the JBC was established as a local commission designated by the Japan Professional Boxing Association, a group of boxing stable owners. It has been the only well-organized office to sanction all professional boxing matches in Japan, managing ring officials, licensing boxers and committing itself to their safety. But some internal troubles emerged in the disruption due to the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, resulting in chronic functional incompetence and multiple lawsuits. Its chief director, Arihira Nagata, said that a plan to reform or replace the system would be announced at the end of April and that the old JBC would stay committed to fights already scheduled, including the April 9 Gennadiy Golovkin-Ryota Murata mega-event, during the dissolution process.

I wish the JBC could have redeemed itself, as I have appreciated the organization's superb work and its history, and I believed it was one of the best boxing commissions in the world. The office – always located (despite small moves) next to the world's busiest boxing venue, Korakuen Hall – had everything. I visited there every other day in the late 1990s while on the editorial staff of Boxing Magazine to pick up monthly fight schedules, updated bout sheets, results from all regions and some 20- or 30-year-old records without trouble, as the information was organized perfectly on the shelves and the friendly staff could answer any questions. And the JBC updated domestic divisional ratings every month, sanctioned national championship bouts, communicated with the other local commissions whenever licensed boxers fought abroad, had systems to train officials and to educate insiders about boxers' safety and health along with commission doctors – and much more.

I thank the JBC for its unsung but tremendous service, and I hope that the right people will follow its good tradition.

★★★

"Drama in Saitama," the much-anticipated rematch between the "Monster," Naoya Inoue, the three-division world titlist who currently holds the Ring, IBF and WBA titles at bantamweight, and Nonito Donaire, conqueror of four divisions and current WBC 118-pound beltholder, has finally been set for June 7. It will take place at Saitama Arena, the same venue where Inoue earned an emotional victory over the Filipino legend in November 2019, and will be streamed live in Japan exclusively by Amazon Prime Video for Amazon Prime members without extra charge. The tickets are priced from (U.S.) $2,200 at the top, a record high for domestic boxing that ties GGG-Murata, down to (U.S.) $110 and will be sold in a lottery-type system.

Finally, the main character of the current bantamweight division has his target in front of him. "When it was officially set, I got really excited, and it brought back clear memories of our first encounter at the final of the [2019 World Boxing Super Series]. Donaire executed two great knockouts recently, and those performances touched me a lot and motivated me a lot to fight him again." Inoue is always hungry for something challenging to bring out his best.

Donaire looked great in the video message that he sent for the

THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

presser. "It's going to a hunt. You trap him, hunt him. You have a game plan, game strategies, and you catch the Monster!"

Inoue admits that his four-year campaign at 118 pounds will be over soon and that Donaire is the one who he wants to devote himself to conquering before moving on. He no longer keeps his eyes on WBO titlist John Riel Casimero to unify all the major belts.

"Now I focus on only Donaire. I won our first contest, but this time I will do that again in a better way. It will start from the 13th round. Titles, records don't matter to me here. My goal is just Nonito Donaire, to knock him out."

Manny Pacquiao lands a right on Erik Morales during their anticipated rematch.

PHILIPPINES

BY RYAN SONGALIA

Their first fight was all "drama in Saitama," and there's no reason to believe their second meeting won't be more of the same.

Nonito Donaire may have fallen short in his first go-around with Naoya Inoue, but he has a chance of turning the tables on June 7. Fight number one was a non-stop shootout, with Inoue surviving being stunned several times to drop Donaire in the 11th and take a competitive unanimous decision in 2019. Inoue suffered fractures to his right orbital bone, the product of Donaire's vaunted left hook, and was far more defensive against the aging Filipino American than he had ever been in a pro fight.

Donaire hasn't exactly sat around waiting for a rematch. After missing 2020, the 39-year-old came back with a vengeance in 2021, destroying the previously unbeaten Nordine Oubaali and sending him into retirement before knocking out Reymart Gaballo to set up this unification clash.

Donaire is already a first-ballot Hall of Famer, but a win over the pound-for-pound claimant would send his resume' to another level. Here's a look at how other Filipino greats fared in notable rematches.

Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales II • Jan. 21, 2006

Pacquiao built his legacy on rematches, but none had an impact like this one. Pacquiao had narrowly lost to Morales the previous year but had plenty going for him in the rematch, including getting to wear his preferred Cleto Reyes gloves. Morales had also been beaten by Zahir Raheem in between these two fights and was having trouble shrinking his aging body down to 130 pounds. All of that came together on this fateful night, when Pacquiao rearranged Morales' nose and dropped him twice in the 10th to send Morales to his first-ever stoppage loss.

Luisito Espinosa-Alejandro Gonzalez II • March 1, 1996

Espinosa had to live down the mental burden of their first fight nearly three years earlier, when a right hand sent him down in Round 2, after which he rose up only to wander to the neutral corner – where "Cobrita" Gonzalez was standing – and collapsing back down. This time, Espinosa had the advantage of having beaten the man who had just beaten Gonzalez, Manuel Medina, to capture the WBC featherweight title which Gonzalez had previously snatched from Kevin Kelley.

Espinosa looked to be on the verge of another knockout loss when he suckered Gonzalez in for a right hand, followed by a right and a left that put Gonzalez down on the canvas in the fourth, looking just as helpless as Espinosa had in their first bout.

Flash Elorde-Sandy Saddler II • Jan. 18, 1956

There were probably few outside of the Asia-Pacific region who had heard of Gabriel "Flash" Elorde before he beat the reigning featherweight champion, Saddler, by a one-sided decision in a non-title bout in 1955, but the win was good enough to earn Elorde a rematch and a shot at the title.

The rematch was a bloody affair, with Elorde suffering from a cut over his left eye from the middle of the fight, which inevitably was the cause of stoppage in Round 13. A New York Times headline read "Saddler punches and butts

JED JACOBSOHN

his way to victory" in what would be the third-to-last fight of Saddler's career. Elorde wouldn't be champion until 1960, winning the junior lightweight championship from Harold Gomes at the Cow Palace in Daly City, California, the same place where he had lost to Saddler. He'd reign atop the 130-pound division for seven years.

Rolando Navarrete-Rafael Limon II • Dec. 23, 1988

"The Bad Boy From Dadiangas" was far from perfect in his career, but Navarrete did get a measure of revenge when he ran it back with "Bazooka" Limon. Six years prior, Limon had ended Navarrete's title reign by 12th-round knockout to take the WBC junior lightweight title. Both fighters were past their best by the time they met for a second time in Manila, but Limon had even less to give after punishing losses to Hector Camacho and Julio Cesar Chavez. Limon was dropped in the second and sixth rounds but made it to the final bell of the non-title fight, losing a unanimous decision.

Henry Armstrong-Ceferino Garcia II • March 1, 1940

History tells the story of "Hammerin' Hank" being one bad decision away from winning a world title in a fourth weight division. That may have been true, but it glosses over the fact that Garcia held up his end of the fight and then some. Garcia retained his middleweight champion recognition in California with a 10-round draw after closing Armstrong's left eye from the fourth round onward. Garcia had Armstrong hurt at least twice with his trademark bolo punch uppercuts, according to New York Times reports, and opinions were split at the time as to who deserved to win. There was no such debate over a year earlier, when Armstrong took a clear decision over Garcia in defense of his welterweight championship.

SOUTH AFRICA

BY DROEKS MALAN

Female junior welterweight prospect Hedda Wolmarans (7-0, 4 KOs) took a big step up when she faced the more experienced Ruth Chisale (11-1 at the time) from Malawi. After 10 rounds, Wolmarans won an unpopular unanimous decision and a regional IBF belt.

Fighting on her home turf in Johannesburg, Wolmarans got off to a good start, boxing from a distance in the opening round, landing her straight left from the southpaw stance with some body shots mixed in. It was not to last.

From the second bell, Chisale, who holds a win over current European welterweight champion Ornella Domini and came in more than five pounds over the 140-pound limit, changed gears and went after the South African. She did two things well: She kept it at close quarters, negating Wolmarans' height and reach, and she let her hands go with abandon.

Wolmarans kept fighting back, but her Malawian opponent simply replied with more and then some. The South African appeared to be heading to a stoppage defeat in the fourth, gulping air in-between weathering attacks and looking flustered.

She was gutsy, though, and fought back well in the fifth, going to the body and landing some shots inside. But in the sixth and seventh, Chisale went back to work, driving Wolmarans around the ring.

Then, in the eighth, Wolmarans finally found her stride, wobbling Chisale with a right hook. She built on that by slamming in some straight lefts to the body in the ninth.

In a dramatic 10th, Wolmarans nailed Chisale with a right hook-left hand combination, hurting her badly. Trying desperately to score a sensational stoppage, the South African flurried but did not have enough zip to put Chisale away.

It was one of the best female fights in a long time, but the scores left some ringsiders unhappy. Giving the South African the benefit of the doubt in close rounds, one card of 96-94 made sense, but the other two of 97-93 were an insult to Chisale.

Chisale is an exciting, aggressive fighter. Wolmarans, although overwhelmed at times, showed tremendous heart and conditioning. Both ladies can punch, a rare commodity in female boxing. A rematch would certainly be welcomed.

The Ring's No. 9-ranked flyweight Jackson Chauke was expected to make easy work of inexperienced Phumelele Cafu, who came into their South African title fight in East London with an unremarkable 4-0-2 record. Instead, Chauke had to salvage a majority draw over 12 rounds when the challenger gave him all he could handle in a very good fight, with both fighters displaying high skill levels.

It was another fight with plenty of close rounds where one had to pick between the more telling blows of Chauke and the quick flurries of the busier Cafu. Chauke boxed well in spots behind his jab, finding the target with his straight right, but then Cafu fired back with flashy combinations only for Chauke to reply with a sneaky left uppercut.

An extended toe-to-toe exchange had the crowd on their feet, singing and dancing, where they remained until the final round, when both fighters let it all hang out.

The ring announcer read two scores of 114-114 with a third dissenting score of 115-113 for Cafu and then, inexplicably, announced Cafu the winner by majority decision! Officials at ringside waited until the next day to rectify the error.

At least justice was served in the end. Chauke moves to 20-1-2 and, at the age of 36, hopefully a shot at a major belt holder ASAP. As for Cafu, he has served notice as a prospect to watch.

THE SAAD REMATCH:

On August 7, 1982, Dwight Muhammad Qawi – then Dwight Braxton – scored a brutal sixth-round stoppage over Matthew Saad Muhammad to retain the Ring and WBC light heavyweight titles at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. The fight was terribly one-sided, with the challenger absorbing strong punishment in every session. Qawi had relieved Saad Muhammad of the titles eight months earlier in Atlantic City. It was a similarly one-sided affair with Qawi implementing a savage and relentless attack en route to a 10th-round stoppage.

COMING UP

Pound-for-pound king Canelo Alvarez aims to win a second light heavyweight title at the expense of WBA beltholder Dmitry Bivol.

MAY

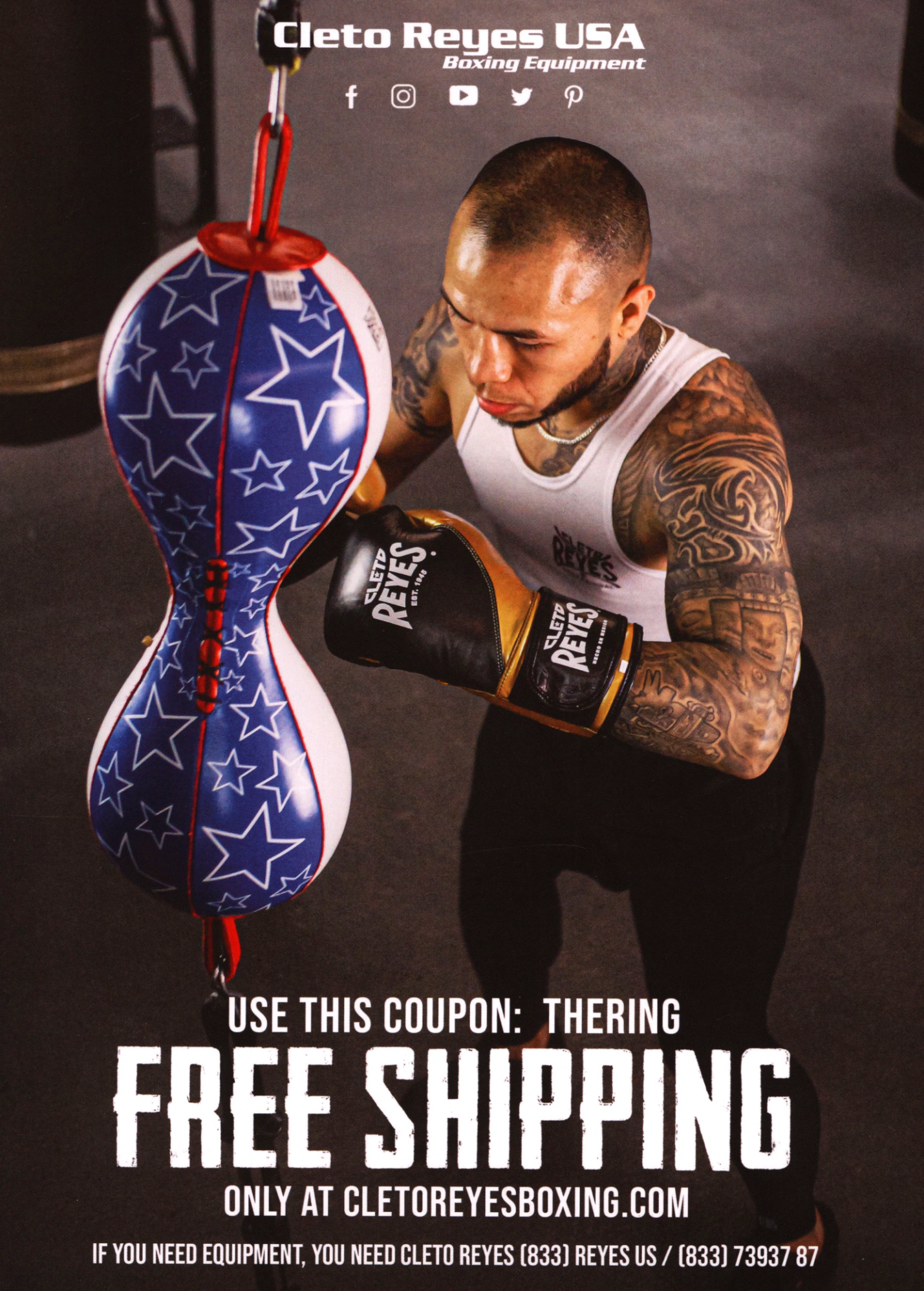
MAY 7 – Dmitry Bivol vs. Canelo Alvarez, light heavyweights (for Bivol's WBA title), Las Vegas (DAZN).
MAY 14 – Jermell Charlo vs. Brian Castano, junior middleweights (for Charlo's Ring/IBF/WBA/WBC and Castano's WBO titles), Carson, California (Showtime). Also, Jaron Ennis vs. Custio Clayton, welterweights.
MAY 21 – David Benavidez vs. David Lemieux, super middleweights, Glendale, Arizona (Showtime).
MAY 21 – Zach Parker vs. Demetrius Andrade, super middleweights, Derby, England.
MAY 21 – Joshua Buatsi vs. Craig Richards, light heavyweights, London (DAZN). Also, Chantelle Cameron vs. Victoria Noelia Bustos, junior welterweights (for Cameron's Ring/IBF/WBC titles).
MAY 28 – Gervonta Davis vs. Rolando Romero, lightweights, Brooklyn, New York (Showtime PPV).

JUNE

JUNE 4 - George Kambosos Jr. vs. Devin Haney, lightweights (for Kambosos' Ring/IBF/WBA/WBO and Haney's WBC titles), Melbourne, Australia (ESPN).
JUNE 4 – Stephen Fulton vs. Daniel Roman, junior featherweights (for Fulton's WBC/WBO titles), Minneapolis (Showtime).
JUNE 7 – Naoya Inoue vs. Nonito Donaire, bantamweights (for Inoue's Ring/IBF/WBA and Donaire's WBC titles), Saitama, Japan.
JUNE 18 – Jermall Charlo vs. Maciej Sulecki, middleweights (for Charlo's WBC title), Houston (Showtime).

JULY

JULY 9 – Mark Magsayo vs. Rey Vargas, featherweights (for Magsayo's WBC title), San Antonio, Texas (Showtime).
POSSIBLY JULY 23 – Oleksandr Usyk vs. Anthony Joshua, heavyweights (for Usyk's IBF/WBA/WBO titles), Saudi Arabia.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